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ABSTRACT

This package is the second of twelve in the Skills for Adult Guidance Educators (SAGE) system, which provides instruction in a set of necessary competencies specifically designed for adult education counselors, teachers, and paraprofessionals. The materials provide a process for developing and implementing counseling and guidance programs unique to different target populations, program settings, and local conditions. Contents include four modules that pertain to one role statement. The role statement describes the trainee objective to demonstrate ability to structure and conduct group counseling sessions. Each module contains some or all of the following information: topic, learning objective, rationale, preassessment, learning activities, and postassessment. Appended materials (supplemental informational articles) may be used with all or individual modules. (YLB)

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SKILLS FOR ADULT GUIDANCE EDUCATORS.

Package 2

Skills in Group Counseling

Developed by

the

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

of the

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Introduction

Due to the nature of the skills necessary to achieve competence in the area of group counseling, it is recommended that close supervision be provided. Hopefully, the supervisor will have a knowledge of group counseling and be able to demonstrate the ability to be an effective group leader. The appended materials in this package are located after module 5.4. The appended materials may be used with all modules in this package or with individual modules depending upon trainee's objective.

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Role Statement 5.0

Demonstrate ability to structure and conduct group counseling sessions

MODULE 5.1

TOPIC

Explore criteria used to form counseling group.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will state and support criteria used for formation of groups for group counseling.

RATIONALE

Group counseling is considered to be an effective and efficient means of achieving counseling goals. Exposing group members to the value systems, interpretations of reality, and perceptions of fellow group members will greatly improve the participants' ability to develop, improve, and maintain interpersonal relationships. The counselor's skills are paramount in group counseling. Of great value to the counselor are the criteria that help determine the formation of groups. Adequate formation of groups will improve members' interaction.

PREASSESSMENT

Describe your rationale for decisions regarding the following factors related to group counseling using two "expert" references to support your answers. (References, when no others are selected, are Mahler's Group Counseling in the Schools [Chapter 13] and Gazda's Group Counseling [Chapter 2]).

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Prior acquaintance
4. Personality difference
5. Size of group
6. Frequency of meetings
7. Duration of group
8. Length of meeting time
9. Setting
10. Preparation for members of the group
11. Ending the group
12. Question of being open or closed group

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Read the following (available from interlibrary loan):

Gazda, Group Counseling: A Developmental Approach (Chapter 2)

Glanz, Groups in Guidance (Chapter 3)

Hansen and Cramer, Group Guidance and Counseling in the Schools (Chapter 5)

Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools (Chapter 3)

Muro and Freeman, Readings in Group Counseling (Chapter 6)

Ohlson, Group Counseling (Chapter 5)

Learning Activity Two

Discuss group formation criteria with practicing counselors to obtain their rationales.

Learning Activity Three

Observe or participate in a group counseling setting to familiarize yourself with group processes.

Learning Activity Four

Form one or more groups at your field/work site to "test" your criteria.

POSTASSESSMENT

From Learning Activity Four present an oral or written statement of your observations and support them with a minimum of two authors.

MODULE 5.2

TOPIC

Identify the stages of development in a working group.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be able to recognize various stages of development in a group which he observes or in which he participates.

RATIONALE

In the process of group counseling the counselor will find it necessary to monitor the progress of his group during the group counseling session. The outcome of monitoring will be the identification of various stages of development the group experiences. The various stages will be characterized by observable behaviors of the group members. Awareness of these specific behaviors will assist the counselor in deciding how and when he should move the group into the next stage of development.

PREASSESSMENT

Describe group member behaviors which are typical of the following stages in group counseling and submit to your supervisor for one hundred percent approval.

1. Involvement stage
2. Transition stage
3. Working stage
4. Ending stage

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Observe or participate in an on-going counseling group.

Learning Activity Two

Read the following (available from interlibrary loan):

Gazda, Group Counseling: A Developmental Approach (Chapter 2)

Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7)
Ohlson, Group Counseling (Chapter 5).

POSTASSESSMENT

Orally or in writing identify the stage of group development which you observed and give examples to support your identification. Also, use a minimum of one "expert" to support your conclusion.

MODULE 5.3

TOPIC

Learn to structure a counseling group.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be able to structure a group in group counseling.

RATIONALE

Structuring or "laying ground rules" for the group is important in helping the group discover its purpose. Structuring also provides parameters within which the group can function in order to achieve its established purpose.

PREASSESSMENT

Briefly answer the following questions and submit to your supervisor for one hundred percent approval.

1. Relative to group counseling, what does "structuring" mean?
2. Why is it desirable to have a "design" for counseling a group?
3. How do you determine how much structuring is necessary for you as a group leader?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Observe or participate in an on-going counseling group.

Learning Activity Two

Read the following (available from inter-library loan):

Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools (Chapter 4, particularly pp. 104-107)

Malamud and Machover, Techniques in Self-Confrontation

Ohlson, Group Counseling (Chapter 5)

Otto, Group Methods to Actualize Human Potential

POSTASSESSMENT

Defend orally or in writing to the supervisor the structuring techniques used in Learning Activity One. Supply a minimum of one "expert" source as support for that structuring approach.

MODULE 5.4

TOPIC

Evidence appropriate responses to client behaviors in groups.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be aware of appropriate counselor responses to client behaviors which arise in group counseling.

RATIONALE

Within the counseling framework, it is necessary that the counselor function in a group setting. Specifically, the counselor needs to be aware of typical behaviors of group members. He or she should also be aware of possible reasons for exhibited behavior in order to respond in an appropriate manner. Meaningful group interaction will occur as a result of the counselor's responses.

PREASSESSMENT

Respond with eighty percent accuracy to the following types of group behaviors either orally or in writing to your supervisor (if available) by:

1. describing typical group member behaviors
2. suggesting possible reasons for such behavior
3. describing how you would respond to the behavior and why you chose to respond as you did

Types of Group Behaviors

I. The Resister
II. The Advice-giver
III. The Dependent One
IV. The Submissive One
V. The Silent One
VI. The Anxious One
VII. The Griever
VIII. The Scapegoat
IX. The Socializer
X. The Acting-out Member
XI. The Hostile One
XII. The Monopolist
XIII. The Manipulator

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Read the following (available from interlibrary loan):

Gazda, Group Counseling: A Developmental Approach, (Chapters 2, 5)

Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools, (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Ohlson, Group Counseling, (Chapters 6, 9)

Appended material by Moustakas.

Learning Activity Two

Interview and observe practicing counselors regarding their approach to group counseling.

Learning Activity Three

Lead a counseling group at least two times.

Optional Learning Activities

If necessary, plan optional learning activities with supervisor.

POSTASSESSMENT

Complete Preassessment with eighty percent accuracy. Defend your handling of behaviors during counseling sessions in Learning Activity Three above. Use a minimum of one "expert" source in support of your handling.

APPENDED MATERIALS

MEMBER ROLES IN GROUPS
ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY, SELECT,
AND SOLVE COMMON PROBLEMS

(from Lifton, W.N., Working With Groups.
New York: Wiley, 1961, pp. 17-18)

A. Group Task Roles. Facilitation and coordination of group problem solving activities.

1. INITITATOR CONTRIBUTOR. Offers new ideas or changed ways of regarding group problem or goal. Suggests solutions: How to handle group difficulties. New procedure for group. New organization for group.

2. INFORMATION SEEKER. Seeks clarification of suggestions in terms of factual adequacy and/or authoritative information and pertinent facts.

3. OPINION SEEKER. Seeks clarification of values pertinent to what group is undertaking or values involved in suggestions made.

4. INFORMATION GIVER. Offers facts or generalizations which are "authoritative" or relates own experiences pertinently to group problem.

5. OPINION GIVER. States belief or opinion pertinently to suggestions. Emphasis on his proposals of what should become group's views of pertinent values.

6. ELABORATOR. Gives examples or develops meaning, offers rationale for suggestions made before, and tries to deduce how ideas might work out.

7. COORDINATOR. Clarifies relationships among ideas and suggestions, pulls ideas and suggestions together, or tries to coordinate activities of members of sub-groups.

8. EVALUATOR. Subjects accomplishments of group to "standards" of group functioning. May evaluate or question "practicability," "logic," or "procedure" of a suggestion or of some unit of group discussion.

9. ORIENTER. Defines position of group discussion, summarizes. Shows departures from agreed directions or goals. Questions direction or discussion.

10. ENERGIZER. Prods group to action or decision. Tries to stimulate group to "greater" or "higher quality" activity.

11. PROCEDURAL TECHNICIAN. Performs routine tasks (distributes materials, etc.) or manipulates objects for group (rearranging chairs, etc.)

12. RECORDER. Writes down suggestions, group decisions, or products of discussion. "Group memory."

B. Group Growing and Vitalizing Roles. Building group-centered attitudes and orientation.

13. ENCOURAGER. Praises, agrees with, and accepts others' ideas. Indicates warmth and solidarity in his attitudes towards members.

14. HARMONIZER. Mediates intra-group scraps. Relieves tensions.

15. COMPROMISER. Operates from within a conflict in which his ideas or position is involved. May yield status, admit error, discipline himself, "come half-way."

16. GATEKEEPER AND EXPLOITER. Encourages and facilitates participation of others. Let's hear . . . Why not limit length of contributors so all can react to problems?

17. STANDARD SETTER OR EGO IDEAL. Expresses standards for group to attempt to achieve in its functioning or applies standards in evaluating the quality of group processes.

18. GROUP OBSERVER AND COMMENTATOR. Keeps records of group processes and contributes these data with proposed interpretations into group's evaluation of its own procedures.

19. FOLLOWER. Goes along somewhat passively. Is friendly audience.

C. Antigroup Roles. Tries to meet felt individual needs at expense of group wealth rather than through cooperation with group.

20. AGRESSOR. Deflates status of others. Expresses disapproval of values, acts, or feelings of others. Attacks group or problem. Jokes aggressively, shows envy by trying to take credit for other's ideas.

21. BLOCKER. Negativistic. Stubbornly and unreasoningly resistant. Tries to bring back issue group intentionally dropped or by-passed.

22. RECOGNITION-SEEKER. Tries to call attention to himself. May boast, report on personal achievements, and in unusual ways, struggle to prevent being placed in "inferior" position, etc.

23. SELF-CONFERROR. Uses group to express personal, non-group oriented, "feeling," "insight," "ideology," etc.

24. PLAYBOY. Displays lack of involvement in group's work. Acting may take form of cynicism, nonchalance, horseplay, or other more or less studied out of "field behavior."

25. DOMINATOR. Tries to assert authority in manipulating group or some individuals in group. May be flattery, assertion of superior status or right to attention, giving of directions authoritatively, interrupting contributions of others, etc.

26. HELP-SEEKER. Tries to get "sympathy" response from others through expression of insecurity, personal confusion or depreciation of himself beyond "reason."

27. SPECIAL INTEREST PLEADER. Verbally for "small business man," "grass roots" community, "housewife," "leader," etc. Actually cloaking own prejudices or biases on stereotypes which best fit his individual need.

CLARENCE MAHLER'S CONCEPT OF GROUP STAGES

I. The Involvement Stage

Purpose: Getting acquainted and clarifying purposes. Feelings members may have:

- -Do I belong here?
- -Will I be overexposed?
- -I won't be able to talk without shaking
- -Maybe I'll sound too dumb
- -I hope we don't have true confessions
- -Everyone else looks brighter than me
- -Will I have to talk?
- -Can I trust the others?
- -How would others react if they knew how I feel?
- -Does this leader know what he's doing?
- -Can I trust him?
- -Is he going to involve himself or sit outside and "analyze" me?

Feelings the facilitator may have:

- -Will everyone participate or some monopolize?
- -Will everyone want to come back?
- -Will I be able to respond and attend to everything going on at once?
- -Should I help individuals more than I'm doing?
- -Will we be able to really get involved with each other?
- -Why did I decide to do this? I should have stayed in my safe little cubicle.

Techniques for obtaining involvement:

- -Modeling desired behavior
- -Structured getting acquainted activities (dyads, triads, statements of expected outcomes, etc.)
- -Exploring members reasons for being there
- -Discussion of ground rules or contracts

II. The Transition Stage

Characteristics: Moving from an essentially social atmosphere to a therepeutic-educational atmosphere.

Persons who may slow down group at this stage:

- -"Odd guy" (person who seems to function in a markedly different fashion than the other group members)

-Easily rejected member
-Openly hostile member

Leader characteristics at this stage:

-Encourages sharing of feeling
-Alert to individual members behavior and responsive to that behavior
-Models desired facilitative behaviors
-Open, shares his feelings, looks for meaning of his own behavior

III. The Working Stage

Members bring concerns to group and readily uses the group situation for greater self-understanding.

Group characteristics:

-Greater openness
-Assume much individual responsibility for responding to other members
-Group identity and solidarity
-High morale level
-Feeling of really belonging

Counselor behavior:

-Allows members to do most of the interacting
-Continues to be alert for any unexpected nuances in group interaction
-Intervenes primarily only to protect the belonging of an individual or to provide support for desired growth in individuals

IV. The Ending Stage

"Commencement" —members explore application and generalization of group experience to "out there."

Group characteristics:

-Longing to "hold on" to group
-Discussion of ways to maintain growth
-Fear of loss of security of group

Counselor behavior:

-Support for "trying out wings"
-Exploration of feelings about termination
-Support for termination
-Generalization to other situations

A CONTRACT
FOR A LABORATORY
IN INTERPERSONAL GROWTH

This laboratory in interpersonal relations will be conducted according to a contract. The purpose of the contract is to provide a facilitating structure for the group experience and to let you know the nature of the experience you are about to enter. Please read the following contract carefully and then decide whether you would like to participate or not in the kind of experience described in the contract. If you want to participate in the group, you must subscribe to the contract.

The Goals of the Group

The overriding goal of the group is, of course, interpersonal growth. Interpersonal growth involves discovering the group, but it is assumed that all that is good in personal growth (e.g., reduction of anxiety, enhanced feelings of self-worth, a keen sense of self-identity) must be placed at the service of interpersonal relationships. Man is a relational being and the height of this growth lies in his relationships with others.

Leadership in the Group

The group will have a leader, but since he is not a leader in the traditional sense of that term, he is sometimes referred to by different titles, such as "trainer" or "facilitator." The name is not important, but his function is. He is skilled in group dynamics and has had a good deal of experience participating in and working with groups. However, he is in the group because he, too, is interested in growing interpersonally. Therefore, he subscribes to the same contract that you do; that is, he is a leader-member. As leader, his function is to put his knowledge of groups and his experience in groups at the service of your group. He is a resource person, not a super-member. He is someone like you, interested in increasing his interpersonal effectiveness by involving himself with you. If certain provisions of the contract are not clear, he will explain them to you, but he is not in the group as teacher, at least in the traditional sense. If fact, a good teacher is one who likes to get together with others in order to learn.

The ideal is that the leadership qualities he demonstrates become diffused among the members of the group so that, in a sense, the group might act as its own leader. He will work for that diffusion. What are some of the specific things he will do? He will tell you about some of the difficulties that face most beginning laboratory groups. For instance, some groups spend a good deal of time dealing with the leader: that is, they make him a father figure and try to work out authority problems with

him. However, in this group, the leader is not meant to be an authority figure. It is not that the participants may not work through authority problems, but there are other ways of doing this besides focusing on the group leader. If too much time is spent dealing with the leader, this can prove detrimental to the overriding goal of the group. In this group, interpersonal growth means that the members are to spend a good deal of time involving themselves with one another (including the leader-member).

From the beginning, the leader-member will model the kinds of behavior called for by the contract. Again, he does so not because he is completely self-actualized in the area of interpersonal relating, but because the sooner the group begins to engage in contractual behavior, the better.

The Laboratory Nature of the Group Experience

The experience you are about to enter is called a laboratory for a number of reasons. Part of the contract is to accept the experience as a laboratory. This is what a laboratory entails:

(1) Learning by doing. You will learn how to relate to others more effectively by actually relating. You will see yourself in action and you will talk about the ways in which you relate to the other members of the group.

(2) A Climate of experimentation. The term "laboratory" implies experimentation. You will experiment with your own behavior, attempting to relate to others in new ways. This does not mean that the group will invent new ways of acting. Rather, you will try to deal with others in ways that you do not ordinarily use in your day-to-day contracts. For instance, if you are usually quiet and reserved, you may experiment with speaking up in the group. For you, this is a new way of being present to others.

(3) No prejudging the experiment. The person who comes to the laboratory convinced that the experiment will not work usually leaves it feeling quite self-satisfied. His prophecy has been self-fulfulling. You are asked not to prejudge the experience but, rather, to reserve your judgment. The only way you will ever know whether the experiment works or not is to give yourself to it as completely as possible.

(4) Feedback. Your own behavior is the major input in the laboratory. But trying new ways of behaving is somewhat useless unless it is possible to determine how this behavior strikes others. Therefore, you are asked not only to react to others but to tell others how their behavior strikes you. You, too, will receive feedback from the other participants. By means of such feedback, you should come to a better understanding of your own interpersonal abilities and limitations.

Try to get a feeling for your ability to involve yourself with others. All of us have strong points and all of us have areas of deficit in our interpersonal living. Use the group to get a feeling for both.

Rules of Immediacy

If the laboratory experience is to be intensive, it must be as immediate as possible. Certain rules facilitate a climate of immediacy in the group.

(1) The here and now. Deal with the here and now rather than the there and then. Your interactions with one another are the most important part of the laboratory. When you do talk about things that have happened or the happening outside the group, do so in such a way as to make them relevant to what is happening in the group. If you keep talking about things outside the group, people and situations unfamiliar to the other participants, you will lose their interest. Make the outside and the past somehow present to your fellow group members. Talking about people and things outside the group is sometimes a way of fleeing from more intensive group interaction.

(2) Cooperation. Your goals can be reached only if you cooperate with one another. This does not mean at all that there will not be disagreements, but interpersonal growth is much more likely to take place in an atmosphere of cooperation than in one of competition or conspiracy. This does not mean that you have to be "nice" for the sake of being nice; a cooperative group structure does not exclude strong feeling and confrontation. But there is little immediacy unless you move toward the other person in an effort to involve yourself with him. The contract provides a structure for cooperation. If you are fulfilling the provisions of the contract, you can be sure that you are cooperating with the other participants.

(3) Avoid generalities. When you speak, try to be concrete and specific. For instance, when speaking about yourself, use "I." Do not use "you" when you mean "I." In fact, try to avoid using general words to refer to people, such as "you," "one," "people," "men," "they," "we," and the like. Do not say: "There are some people in the group with whom I get along better," but rather: "I seem to get along better with John and Mary than with any of the other members of the group." Finally, do not make speeches to the whole group; even if you want to address the whole group, the other members will often sit there and listen respectfully to you, but not one will respond to you. Speeches addressed to everybody tend to be addressed to nobody. In summary, use "I" when you mean "I"; be concrete, avoiding vagueness and generalities; try to address individuals

in the group, even when you are addressing the entire group (in a way, you are always addressing the entire group whenever you speak).

(4) Do not "siphon off" issues of concern to the group. Sometimes group members get together in twos and threes and work through issues that have arisen within the group. There is nothing wrong with this provided you summarize to the group what has taken place. If the issues come up within the group, then, in some sense, they belong to it. If these issues, then, are settled outside, some of the life of the group is "siphoned off" and the group becomes somewhat anemic because of it; that is, it loses a degree of immediacy.

The Elements of Dialogue: Emotion, Language, and Fusion of the Two

You will contact one another principally by talking to one another. Language, then, and the expression of feeling are crucial factors for this experiment.

(1) Emotion. Try to let reality have an emotional impact on you, especially the reality of the other members of the group. Let yourself feel various emotions; feel what it is like to experience these emotions. Secondly, let yourself react as constructively as possible to what you experience. Do not be overly intellectual: ideas are certainly important, but in laboratories in interpersonal relations, emotions are equally important. Tell others, then, not just how you think about things, but how you feel about them. Sometimes our ideas and our emotions do not coincide. It is good to be able to recognize this division within yourself.

(2) Human language. Get a new feeling for the power of human language. How do you translate yourself into language? Find out whether your language gives expression to the deep you or only to the superficial you. If you tend to use lifeless language in your day-to-day contacts, experiment with a more forceful use of language in the group. Try to avoid cliches; use words that have more power than the words you ordinarily use. Language can be a form of contact or it can be a barrier between you and the others; try to make your language as contact-producing as possible. If you speak in cliches and generalities, this might well reflect an unwillingness on your part to make deeper contacts with others.

(3) Poetry: welding feeling to language and language to feeling. Try to let your feelings find expression in language and let your language be colored by feeling. Some of us experience things deeply, but we cannot translate our experience into language. The laboratory is an opportunity to make attempts to do just that. When you succeed, your language will be, in one of the deepest senses, poetry, for it will be an integrated expression of the person you are.

The Core Interactions

The heart of this contract and, therefore, of the group experience itself is the interaction in which you will engage. You are asked to experiment with the kinds of interaction listed below. They are ways of contacting others, of involving yourself with others and, therefore, offer possibilities of growing with others. You are asked, then, to engage in the following kinds of activity in the group.

(1) Self-disclosure. You are asked to be open about yourself. This means that you are to talk about yourself in such a way as to get the real you (rather than a facade) across to others. In one sense, facts about yourself to others in the group is important. You are not asked to reveal your past life or your darkest secrets. You are important, not your secrets. What you say about yourself should encourage others to "come in"; that is, self-disclosure should constitute a kind of invitation to others to involve themselves with you.

It is up to you to determine how you will talk about yourself and what you will say. This sounds very abstract right now, and it will be easier to determine in the give and take of the group interaction. There are various levels of self-disclosure: the more personal something is, the deeper it is. The general level of self-revelation is determined by the group itself and depends on a number of factors—for instance, the willingness of individuals to take risks and the level of trust in the group. The point is that the group members, and not the contract, determine the level at which they will work. You will, undoubtedly, reveal yourself at a level at which you feel comfortable, or perhaps a little beyond (that is, you will "risk" talking about yourself). A moderate degree of anxiety in the group is generally a sign that you are working at least a little beyond the level of comfort, and such anxiety, if controlled, can be a help rather than a hindrance. Self-disclosure, if it is authentic, if it is really a translation of yourself, tends to create intimacy. If you have difficulty talking about yourself, if you become too anxious, it might well be that you fear rejection, but it is also possible that you are afraid of the intimacy to which self-revelation leads.

Self-disclosure must be in keeping with the here and now rule. If you talk about your past, you should do so because it tells something about the kind of person you are here and now in this group. If you talk about how you are outside the group, this, too, should be made relevant to the you that is in the group. That is, self-disclosure should stimulate interaction with others. Never just talk on about yourself to a passive audience. In keeping with the here and now rule, one area of self-disclosure is most important: you should talk about what is happening to you in the group. For instance, if you are anxious, let others know that

you are anxious: others want to deal with you as you are, but this is impossible if you hide your feelings. If you are bored, let others know immediately. It is deadly to wait an hour and then tell others that you have been bored. In a sense, you are responsible for your own boredom if you do not speak up.

Finally, although it was said above that you do not have to talk about your deepest secrets, you may speak as deeply about yourself as you wish. The point is that you will not be forced to do so. Sometimes, if someone else speaks rather personally about himself, you will find it easier to talk about yourself (but you should remember that this works the other way around also).

(2) The manner of expressing feeling. Above, you were encouraged to let emotion be part of the group experience. Too often, we swallow our feelings (for instance, our anger) only to let them filter out in rather unproductive ways (we become cold or uncooperative, we make snide remarks or remain silent, etc.). There is another possibility, however, speak frankly about emotion-laden contacts with one another. For instance, if you are angry, instead of just blowing up or swallowing your anger, let the other know that you are angry and would like to work it through: "John, I'm really angry with what you said, but I'd like to tell you why and get some response from you. If possible, I want to work this out with you here." Perhaps such frankness, coupled with a desire to work things through, would constitute for you a new way of being present to another.

(3) Listening. It is amazing to discover how poorly we listen to others. The contract asks you to examine your ability to listen. Listening does not mean just hearing words and sentences and understanding their meaning; rather, it means reaching out for what another has to say; it means listening to persons rather than just ideas. Learning to pick up all the cues that others emit, both verbal and nonverbal, is part of listening. Facial expressions, gestures, a shrug of the shoulders, bodily positions—all of these are sources of communication. Often, too, when we communicate with one another, we embed surplus messages in our overt communications by the way we say things. You are asked to become sensitive to the surplus message aspects of communication also.

(4) Support. It is difficult for people to "put themselves on the line," that is, to engage in meaningful self-disclosure and to express feelings responsibly. When you and the other members of the group do make sincere attempts to fulfill the contract, then you need support. It is assumed that you are basically supportive, that is, that you have some kind of basic acceptance of others simply because they are; otherwise you would not want to engage in an experience for interpersonal growth.

Still, you can accept others sincerely without always approving of everything they do. It may be, for instance, that you reveal things about yourself which you yourself do not approve. Obviously, then, though you would expect others to support you in your self-disclosure, you would hardly expect them to approve of the things that you disapprove of in yourself.

Support has two phases. The antecedent phase consists in encouraging others to fulfill the contract. For instance, one of the best ways of encouraging others to fulfill the contract is to fulfill it yourself. The leader-member will try to do just this by modeling the behavior called for by the contract. The second phase refers to your support of those who do engage in contractual interaction. Others will reveal themselves; they will express their feelings. Support then means giving some kind of recognition that the other has fulfilled the contract, that he has done a good thing. Support means being responsive to the behavior of others. Again, engaging in contractual behavior is an excellent way of giving phase-2 support. For instance, if one of the members engages in responsible self-disclosure, you may give him a good deal of support by revealing something about yourself in the same area, something that responds to his concern.

Although support is absolutely necessary for effective group operation, it is also perhaps one of the most difficult of the contractual provisions. When someone "invites you in" by being open about himself, you may feel gauche and find it difficult to respond to him. When someone speaks feelingly about himself, it is too easy to ignore his feelings (for this may be an uncomfortable aspect of his communication) and to try to deal with him on an intellectual level—for instance, by asking him a lot of questions. Because of our discomfort, we try to intellectualize the whole process. However, if you are made uncomfortable by what another says, if you are unable to respond in what you think would be a meaningful way, do not pretend that you can. Counterfeit support, expressed in such cliches as "I understand," and "I know how you feel," kills group process. Perhaps your best response is to admit that you are uncomfortable, that you are at a loss for a response. This can be supportive in itself, because it is honest. Do not try to show conventional sympathy to others merely because you think that you should say something. Support is the gift of one's person and not the fulfillment of a convention. Learning to be present to others in meaningful support is one of the most important tasks of the group experience.

(5) Confronting others. Sometimes you will find it impossible to agree with what another person is saying or doing. If this is true, tell him so as honestly as you can, and tell him why. This is confrontation. Confrontation is, basically, an invitation to another to examine or

reflect upon his behavior "in community," that is, in the context of the group. For instance, perhaps another person in the group is simply not fulfilling the provisions of the contract at all (if he is silent all the time, he could not be). If you tell him this and ask him to examine his behavior, then you are confronting him. The way you confront, however, is very important: the cardinal rule is that you should confront another because you are concerned about him and want to involve yourself with him. Confrontation is not just irresponsibly "telling a person off." Reponsible confrontation is an invitation to self-examination, not an act of punishment. If you are merely punishing another, you might find some relief (for instance, from your anger), but you are doing little to set up interpersonal contact between yourself and the other. Undeniable, confrontation will almost always have some kind of punitive side effects (none of us likes to be challenged because of allegedly negative forms of behavior), but punishment cannot constitute the rationale of confrontation. Sometimes it is difficult to confront without making punishment the primary purpose of the act. Confrontation, then, is something you must experiment with in the group.

(6) Responding to confrontation. If confrontation is responsible, that is, if it really is an invitation to self-examination, then obviously the best response is self-examination. However, when we are confronted, even by someone who is concerned for us and wants to involve himself with us, our instinctive response is often twofold: to defend ourselves and to attack the confronter. That is, we respond to the punitive side effects of confrontation instead of to the confrontation itself. Therefore, try to listen to what the one confronting is saying and not just to the feelings he is evoking in you. If what he says is true and if, in addition, he wants to involve himself with you then it is to your advantage to listen, to examine yourself, and to respond to him. This is difficult, but frequently rewarding.

Self-disclosure, expression of feeling, listening, support, confrontation, and response to confrontation—there, then, are the forms of interpersonal behavior with which you are asked to experiment. The ability to engage freely and responsibly in such behaviors is interpersonal growth.

A Stance Against Flight

Engaging in the kinds of interactions described above is not easy, and therefore, we find ways of running away from group process. We tend to run away because we are anxious, because we prefer not to know the truth about ourselves, because it is painful, perhaps, to be the object of another's concern. You are asked, then, to take a stance against all of the different forms of flight from intimate group interaction: calling upon humor whenever things get too serious, keeping one's feelings to

oneself, spending a good deal of time on intellectualized interpretations of the behavior of others. You must become sensitive to the ways you flee group process and to the different ways in which the group as a whole tends to flee (e.g., by tacitly deciding not to talk about certain subjects). Confronting modes of flight in yourself and in the group is essential to the life of the group. One mode of flight is extremely destructive: cynicism about the experience even before one enters into it. The person who comes to the group believing that he will get nothing from it will leave having fulfilled his own prophecy. Try not to flee from your anxiety by employing defenses. Rather, handle your anxiety by dealing with it in the group. It is obvious, by now, that the contract demands that you be active in the group. Silence and withdrawal are types of flight. Perhaps, in other groups, the nonactive member profits, even though he adds little more than his presence. This cannot be the case in the contract group.

Freedom

This contract is not meant to constrain you; it is meant to help you channel your freedom. It says, for instance, that self-disclosure is a value in this group, but it does not say what you must talk about, nor does it dictate the level of disclosure. This is something that you must work out yourself in the give and take of group interaction. You must choose the kinds of interaction most meaningful to you. Some of the experiments you engage in in the group will be successes and some failures, but this is a reflection of life itself. Try not to expect either too much or too little from the group. The only way you can really learn about the possibilities of the group experience is by giving yourself to it.

THE NATURE AND POWER OF ACCEPTANCE

Wesley Huckins

There are many words in counseling vernacular that are used in much the same manner in which a small youngster recites the Pledge of Allegiance or the Lord's Prayer; glibly and with little appreciation of true meaning and significance. It is probable that most counselors who look upon themselves as truly acceptant have not had the time nor the opportunity to examine the concept in all of its ramifications and to reevaluate themselves accordingly. A profession of acceptance on the part of a counselor without a fairly thorough implementation may serve only to confuse his counselee. Such a counselor may present his counselee with another ambivalence and an additional concern rather than helping him to resolve the problems which he already has.

Although recognition of both the concept of acceptance and its essential nature for effective counseling has been fairly widespread, treatment of its dynamics in the professional literature, with some notable exceptions*, appears to have been somewhat cursory. Mention has been made and definitions have been offered but descriptions of process, conditions, effects, and rationale generally seem to have been limited. Possibly because of the lack of depth of treatment, little similarity is apparent among definitions. Surprisingly, and perhaps for the same reason neither is much disagreement manifest.

While Fullmer and Bernard saw acceptance as: "The process of relating to another person as an equal," the 1962 Yearbook Committee for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development described the concept as, ". . . a feeling of being a part of, oneness, of identity with." Acceptance, for them, appeared to be the opposite of rejection and alienation. As might be expected, Rogers viewed acceptance as, ". . . a warm regard . . . as a person of unconditional self worth," and as, ". . . willingness for him another to possess his own feelings in his own way." Brammer and Shostrom conceptualized an attitude of altruistic love which is non-judgmental, permissive, understanding and which sees others as having: (a) infinite worth and dignity, (b) both the right and the capacity to make their own decisions, and (c) ultimate responsibility for their own choices and lives. Jersild felt that although acceptance seemed to be a two-pronged concept (acceptance of others and acceptance of self), the more he investigated, the more he became convinced that the two are inseparable and that one cannot exist without

*Some of these exceptions are: The 1962 Yearbook for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming, Arthur W. Combs, Committee Chairman and Editor.

the other. Other aspects: "Accurate, realistic assessment of self," and ". . . willingness to confront reality, to permit data into awareness" were advanced by Combs. Apparently, an adequate concept of acceptance must be both broad and of many facets.

Such a variety of beliefs and impressions is intriguing. It stimulates the urge to build upon the concept of acceptance and to share observations and to develop relevant ideas. Perhaps a rationale can be developed which will not only help to integrate present concepts but stimulate some new thinking upon the necessity for acceptance in counseling and effective interpersonal relationships. In some instances attempts to define and describe what something is best are facilitated by first developing ideas of what it is not. With this approach in mind, acceptance appears to be:

1. Not an act of condescending, of a helping hand from one who has to one who has not. As has been previously stated, not a process of doing with but rather a facet of the process of "growing together" with each party or variable in the interaction a necessary and contributing part of the growing and the experiencing.
2. Not a lack of involvement or a withholding of one's self. One who chooses to enter, or not to enter, or to withdraw from a situation either physically or psychologically, forfeits the right to accept or to be accepted. The principle of use must be altered substantially when it is applied to people. When things or materials are used, amounts are diminished in proportion to that use. Human functions improve with use and exercise and amounts increase in proportion. The more one gives and shares of himself, the more effective he becomes.
3. Not a condition but a process, not a goal but a continual-striving, not an objective but a procedure which none of us ever completely achieves.
4. Not a bag of tricks, a repertoire of techniques, or an order of buttons to push but an attitude far more apt to be communicated on a feeling basis than by verbal reiteration.
5. Not approval, sympathy or tolerance nor, any kind of an evaluation expectancy good or bad. That is to say, one who categorizes, judges, and labels probably is not perceived as, or actually is, accepting. He sets conditions which must be met before he will permit an interpersonal relationship to develop and communicates in essence. "As you are, you are not good enough to merit my involvement. If you will change

and conform to my expectancies, I may accept you." On this basis, one cannot experience and relate in an authentic and meaningful fashion to another personality. He can contact only the other person's interpretations and reactions to his expectations. What we get from others is restricted by the limitations and the structure we place upon our relationship with them.

6. Not permissive in the sense that no limits are set in the relationship. On the contrary, each person has the obligation to be authentically himself. Acceptance is not possible otherwise. One cannot be what he is not. Nor can he be honest and give the appearance of agreeing with, or favoring, actions which are contrary to his own beliefs and feelings. This does not mean that one must disagree openly, argue with or try to change the other person. It is possible to differ substantially in opinion and action with someone else and still to accept him as a person.

7. Not completely permissive in the respect that a "couldn't care less" attitude is projected. Because of its interpersonal nature and the necessity of more than one there is concern by each for the other. Each person is of value because neither can accept or be accepted without the other.

Statements of this nature concerning the mutuality of acceptance and its being essential for awareness and openness to experience appear to warrant both explanation and continuing conjecture.

1. In the first place, the concept one has of himself, his self-regarding attitudes, are a result of the manner in which he has been accepted by significant others. He comes to see himself as adequate or inadequate, as competent or incompetent, or as acceptable or unacceptable according to the degree in which he has interpreted the reactions of parents, teachers, and peers as either accepting or rejecting. Freud, Rogers, Sullivan and others have advanced similar points of view. Torrance, in dealing with stress and personality formation from the point of view of the latter, commented ". . . the self system develops out of a person's interpersonal experiences. A person is always looking for cues about himself and these cognitions become the anchors whereby he fashions his self definition. Thus, one's self concept is determined primarily by the way others define him."

   An interesting corollary to this also may be that as the individual becomes what he is as a result of interacting with

other people, neither can he change or become something different without interpersonal contacts, inclusion and/or acceptance.

2. The perceptual set or predisposition with which one enters interpersonal situations and structure his relationships with others is determined by the sense of adequacy or competence developed in him by the manner in which he has been accepted. Whether or not one expects to be valued positively or negatively to be welcomed or rejected is determined by his recollections of the way it has been in the past. Hence, he tends to make social contacts with certain expectations and tends to interpret feedback as corroborating them.

3. One tends to feel most questioned, unacceptable, and threatened in those areas where he feels most inadequate. The more he doubts his own worth because he has lacked acceptance, the more threatened and defensive he will be. Prediction of his behavior is possible to a greater degree than with the person who feels adequate because his defensiveness limits the alternatives he can see and the choices he is able to make. Often the person who is defensive and hostile is that way because his emotional state precludes his recognition of any other way of behaving.

4. Anyone with military training knows that from a defensive position, no advances are made. At best a position is maintained, the status quo is perserved and inflexibility is promoted. One who plays defensively only wins few games. In the area of personal growth where progress depends upon willingness to change the person who feels insecure and unacceptable is severely handicapped.

5. Studies have shown that individuals who doubt their ability to deal with certain aspects of their environment tend to defend their self-image by shutting off, denying to awareness, or at least distorting, most of the disturbing elements with it. According to Torrance, in his book Constructive Behavior, Stress Personality and Mental Health, "Whenever anything reduces, interferes with, or destroys awareness of any part of one's environment, some anchors in reality are thereby destroyed and one's capacity for coping constructively with stress is reduced.

6. Since this tendency to shut off significant elements of the environment leads to a withdrawal from interpersonal relationships and/or the distortion of communications and the feedback from them, the individual who cannot accept himself

is denied the validity of perception so necessary for relating effectively to people. He continually bases his attempts to adjust to others on false premises; a process which not only limits his effectiveness with them but prevents him from becoming an authentic person or acceptable to others and to himself.

In his book on Empathy, Its Nature and Uses, Katz stated: "Acceptance relieves the client of using self-defeating defense mechanisms which have blocked his ability to gain objective knowledge of himself and others and which have distorted his role-taking." Defense implies threat and attack. Since it is difficult to trust or to identify with anyone who is perceived as attacking, feelings of loneliness and isolation result. The development and maintenance of personal identity requires something with which to identify and feelings of being a part of oneness with a group, with society, reality, or the scheme of things. For the person who structures his personal contacts in terms of a win-lose, attack-defense dichotomy, no meaningful relationship is possible. In this respect, it is important for counselors and teachers to realize that it is difficult to fight that which is truly acceptive.

7. A person who lacks acceptance and who is threatened, often is agonizingly self-oriented. In much the same manner that physical threat causes people to trample others underfoot when trapped in a burning building or a collapsing athletic bleacher, so psychological threat may cause one to become so self-preoccupied that the reactions, needs, and feelings of others are of little concern to him. He continually provokes and asks in bewilderment: "Why do they hate me?" As Maslow has indicated, one's safety needs must be met before he can become primarily concerned with his needs for belongingness and love. Suinn and Hill in reporting their study on, "The Influence of Anxiety on the Relationship between Self Acceptance and the Acceptance of Others," found increased anxiety, whether general or specific in nature, to be negatively correlated with both the acceptance of self and the acceptance of others. Counselors usually cannot expect either gratitude or concern for themselves to be expressed by troubled counselees. As a matter of fact, a counselee's expression of concern for someone other than himself and his own problems often may be taken as an indication of progress on his part.

8. In the sense of the need for belonging or acceptance, the individual may attempt to gain closer relationships with people by attempting to do, and to be, exactly as they appear to want him to be. Their approval comes to mean so much that his own authenticity and identity are sacrificed. He never comes to know himself because he accepts himself so little and he feels so sure of being rejected that he does not dare to be whatever he is. Because he fears to be himself, he cannot validate his being against the reactions and feedback of others. He is anxious, vacillating from one human contact to another, ambivalent, disorganized, almost impossible to relate to and know, and generally so disturbing that he is difficult to tolerate. Who can deal with a maybe or an inconsistency? How does one relate to a continuing contradiction? (In order to resolve the apparent difference in point of view with statement #7, remember that this, in a very real sense, also is a self-oriented position in the respect of concern for self. The difference is merely one of method and not of attitude.)

9. Although considerable agreement exists, and there is research to indicate, that a significant relationship exists between acceptance of self and acceptance of others, no one has undertaken to say which comes first or which is necessary in order that the other becomes possible. No one appears to know whether one is able to accept others because he himself has been accepted or whether he can accept himself because others have accepted him. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that usually one does not exist without the other.

   As far as professional interpersonal situations, teaching, counseling, psychotherapy and the like, are concerned the question of who shall be accepting first seldom arises. Probably this is because it is taken for granted that the person (teacher, counselor, or therapist) who best accepts himself and who is operating from a position of psychological security must assume the responsibility for establishing the relationship as accepting if he is to promote personal growth rather than merely to become another problem for his client.

   As a matter of fact, the client behaviors which he finds most difficult to accept may constitute the best indications of inadequate feelings or areas in which growth is possible for the counselor, teacher, or therapist. According to Shear, "Inability and unwillingness to accept something as being a part of a person's self concept is related to the person's defect in living with the same thing in another person."

10. It well may be that the attitude of self denial, denuciation of egoism, and insistence that the really good person puts others first which is valued by our culture has operated to inhibit the ability of considerable numbers of its members to honestly value and accept themselves. Check your own reactions the next time someone expresses sincere appreciation to you or pays you a compliment. Can you take what he is trying to give and hence make the expression of his feeling possible or must you deny both him and yourself?

11. It is necessary for one to accept his own behavior, feelings, and reactions, i.e., himself, before it is possible for him to do anything about them. It is necessary for him to own **what** he does before he can assume the personal responsibility for changing or behaving differently. As long as he defends and denies that a self defeating behavior exists, he cannot change it. As Torrance indicated: "Personality growth seems to come from experiences in coping with new demands and stressful conditions . . . The acceptance of a mistake as one's own is the first step in the growth process." It probably is true that those who cannot accept themselves and their behavior really feel that what they do has little influence anyway and that they see themselves more as reacting to the behavior or others than as initiating an action for others to react to. This is another way of saying that what happens is considered as someone else's responsibility or, "If everyone else would just shape up, I'd be fine." A very important part of being helped through counseling or therapy well may be the owning and acceptance of the fact that a problem beyond one's adequacy exists through the asking for help and the definition of one's own inadequacy to deal with the problem through verbalization. Perhaps it is both factual and paradoxical that in order to become more adequate one must first admit to own or accept his inadequacy.

12. One who does not feel accepted and who cannot accept others generally feels isolated or not a part of. He lacks a feeling of personal identity for the reason that this requires an identification with something and as far as meaningful interpersonal contacts are concerned, he has nothing. It is hard to be a person without people. According to Torrance: "It is indeed a rare person who can cut himself off from relations with others for long periods of time without undergoing serious personality deterioration and breakdown." Robinson Crusoe without Friday really was not much. With Friday there, he had status, importance, and identity. If he had been unable to accept Friday and had rejected him he would have deprived himself of all of these.

13. In most, if not all, of the preceding eleven points, a circular and self defeating pattern can be discerned. Because one is unable to accept others which reduces their acceptance of him making self acceptance even more difficult. Because one doubts his ability to deal with reality, he denies or shuts off experience, thus restricting his opportunity to learn coping behaviors and making further denial necessary. For those of us who aspire toward self actualization, it is encouraging to note that such patterns can operate and can be just as self perpetuating and reinforcing in the other direction. Individuals who have been able to accept or to own their inadequacies and who have thus made it possible to deal with them, often are able to progress on beyond where they were in terms of personal effectiveness when the precipitating problem or conflict made it necessary to face the situation and to ask for help.

14. As in all types of human behavior, patterns of acceptance and non-acceptance with their accompanying degrees of openness to interpersonal experience probably are distributed normally. This is to say that certain degrees or shades of grey, as far as being acceptant is concerned, exist in all of us. Probably few of us who claim expertise in the field of interpersonal relationships really have dealt with the nature of our own acceptance of others. The point here is that it will avail us little to be concerned with the quality of acceptance manifest by persons other than ourselves. It is well to emphasize that in this, as well as with other aspects of personal interaction, one begins with the variable he best can control and that is the one which he represents.

In a social sense, the lack of acceptance well may be basic to the anomie, the lack of feeling of identity, and the inability to become really concerned with people beyond our immediate family which appears characteristic of automated urban existence. Examples of these feelings abound in the current literature even to the point where the point of view of a recent book, Psychotherapy the Purchase of Friendship by William Schofield evokes considerable lay and professional agreement. He pointed out: "This quality of 'acceptance' in our culture at this time is peculiarly restricted to the psychotherapeutic contract, but it is common to all such contracts. In this sense, psychotherapy provides a very special, perhaps, ideal form of friendship."

Those of us who are engaged in the so called "helping professions" face a two dimensional problem in making those we attempt to help feel accepted. The first of these, of course, is the personal question of

whether we ourselves really are capable of self and other acceptance. The second facet deals with our ability to communicate this acceptance to our students, counselees, and clients. In a success-oriented social system, the act of designating the parties involved in an interpersonal situation as "helper" and as "needing help" automatically labels one as more competent and the other as less competent. The counselee or student must make a tacit admission of at least some aspect of personal inadequacy in asking for assistance. As has been pointed out, this admission may be particularly difficult for those who feel least adequate and whose need for help is greatest. Perhaps this may furnish some explanation for the general reticence of those who need counseling most to avoid self referrals and the counselor's office and to resist with varying degrees of hostility, being "called in" and other offers of counseling assistance.

Communication on this basis does not proceed with facility. The adequate person, or the one on the most competent side of the desk, well may be perceived status wise, as speaking from a higher level than the one on the other side. We know that this vertical type of communication generally becomes a speaking down to rather than the mutual give and take of a more horizontal relationship.

What can counselors, teachers, and therapists do? How can they help students and counselees to feel accepted and communicate on their level? It may be that the key to these questions lies in a statement made by George Pierson at the conclusion of his study of full-year NDEA Counseling and Guidance Institutes. He stated: "The counselor who cannot receive help himself cannot help others . . . In counseling this means that the very nature of the helping process is such that the helper (the counselor) cannot remain outside of the process that is taking place hopefully in the counselee."

To remain within the process means that there can be no rejection or lack of acceptance by either party. Counselors and teachers need to realize that they need their counselees and students as Crusoe needed Friday. Counselees and students not only present them with a chance to be counselors and teachers but furnish them with the opportunity to become increasingly more effective individuals. Whether the individual counselor or teacher takes full advantage of the opportunity however, depends upon whether he, without defensiveness, can accept himself and recognize his need for others. The variety, appeal, and breadth of experience of other personalities is lost to him who rejects them and cannot tune them in.

Since urging another to learn and change and be different may be construed by him as dissatisfaction with him as he is, or as non-acceptance; how can a counselor or a teacher be an active agent in promoting another's growth and change without reinforcing his feelings of inadequacy? Possibly, this best can be done by offering to change with him, by the counselor or teacher recognizing the opportunity for personal growth presented by his interaction with the counselee or pupil. The fact that each may be starting from a different position on the personal growth continuum ought not to be allowed to distort the counselor's or teacher's or the counselee's or pupil's realization of this. A knowledge of the part which can be played by pupils and counselees in the personal growth of teachers and counselors can be of two-fold value to the latter. Opportunities for learning and growth are seldom realized until their existence is recognized. Such a realization can generate a genuine and profound respect on the part of teachers and counselors for the value of those with whom they work. From this frame of reference, the communication of acceptance should not be difficult. Two things which seem to merit re-emphasis are:

1. Areas with greatest potential for personal growth for most all of us may best be represented by those individuals whom we find to be most disturbing, and
2. The most valid measure of one's acceptance both of self and of others may rest in his capacity to let others help him.

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HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN EFFECTIVE GROUP

John L. Wallen, Ph.D.

1. Members do not ignore seriously intended contributions.

   Each member needs to know the effect of his remarks if he is to improve the way he participates in the group.

   When other members do not respond, the speaker cannot know whether (a) they did not understand his remark, (b) they understood it and agreed with it, (c) they understood it but disagreed with it, (d) they understood it but thought it was irrelevant.

   When this principle is followed, the discussion is cumulative and the group moves together. When it is not followed, the discussion is scattered, the same points are made over and over, and members feel no progress is occurring.

2. Members check to make sure they know what a speaker means by a contribution before they agree or disagree with it.

   The question "What is it?" should precede the question "How do we feel about it?," i.e., understanding is prior to evaluation. Thus, group members frequently use paraphrase, perception check and provisional summaries to check their assumptions of what others are saying and feeling.

3. Each member speaks only for himself and lets others speak for themselves.

   Each member states his reactions as his own and does not attribute them to others or give the impression that he is speaking for others.

   Each member reports his own reactions honestly. He recognizes that unless he is true to himself the group cannot take his feelings into account.

4. All contributions are viewed as belonging to the group to be used or not as the group decides.

   A member who makes a suggestion does not have to defend it as his against the others. Instead, all accept responsibility for evaluating it as the joint property of the group.

5. All members participate but in different and complementary ways.

   When some members fulfill task functions, others carry out interpersonal functions. When some members are providing information,

others are making sure it is understood and organized, or are identifying points of agreement and disagreement.

Each member does not always participate in the same way. Instead, he fulfills whatever function is appropriate to his state in the task, his information about the task and the behavior of the other group members.

6. Whenever the group senses it is having trouble getting work done, it tries to find out why.

Some symptoms of difficulty are excessive hair-splitting, points repeated over and over, suggestions plog and are not considered, private conversations in sub-groups, two or three people dominate discussion, members take sides and refuse to compromise, ideas are attacked before they are completely expressed, apathetic participation.

When such symptoms occur the group shifts easily from working on the task to discussing its own interpersonal process.

Discussing interpersonal process prevents pluralistic ignorance, a group condition where each member, for example, is confused but thinks he is the only one.

7. The group recognizes that whatever it does is what it has chosen to do. No group can avoid making decisions; a group cannot choose whether to decide but only how to decide. Thus, an effective group makes decisions openly rather than by default.

When a group faces an issue it must decide. It may openly agree to take action. It may openly agree to take no action. It may decide by default to take no action. Deciding by default not to act has the same impact on the problem as openly agreeing not to act. However, decisions by default are felt as failures by group members and create tensions among them. A group grows more by openly agreeing not to act than by not acting because they could not agree.

The group views each decision as a provisional trail which can be carried out, evaluated and revised in light of experience. The group is aware that each decision need not be everything-or-nothing and need not last forever.

When the group makes a decision which it does not carry out, it recognizes that the <u>real</u> decision was one not to act although the <u>apparent</u> decision was to act. The group openly discusses why the apparent and the real decision were not the same. They try to learn why some members agreed with the decision although they felt no personal commitment to carry it out.

The group makes decisions in different ways depending upon the kind of issue and the importance of the outcome. The group may vote, delegate the decision to a special sub-group, flip a coin or require complete consensus. The crucial factor is that the group has complete agreement on the way it makes decisions.

8. The group brings conflict into the open and deals with it.

   The members recognize the conflict is inevitable but that the choice is theirs as to whether the conflict will be open (and subject to group control) or disguised (and out of control).

9. The group looks upon behavior which hinders its work as happening because the group allows, or even wants it, and not just as the result of a "problem member."

   A person who continually introduces irrelevancies can change the topic only if other members follow his lead. Instead of labeling him as the problem, the group considers it a group problem and determines why they all let this happen. Maybe the other members welcome his digressions as a way of avoiding open conflict which would occur if they stayed on the topic.

   Likewise, the person who talks too much. . . or jokes too much . . . or continually attack others. . . or never participates, is a sign of a problem shared by the total group. The group needs to discuss it openly as "our problem" in order to eliminate the disruption.

   The group gives individuals helpful information about the impact of their actions on the group, but it does not analyze, dissect, and work them over.

ANGER

Anger is perhaps one of the most troublesome, least understood, and most poorly investigated feeling states. Recently, perhaps because of the growing violence in our society and the intense interest in the process of personal growth, or actualization, the feelings of anger have become of much more interest to both theoreticians and clinical practitioners.

Anger, when the word is mentioned, often evokes fantasies that are destructive, hurtful, or otherwise toxic in content. Rarely do we see anger as a potentially bonding, warming, enlivening, or beneficial feeling. However, anger has the potential for being either beneficial or toxic depending upon how we handle and express it.

Anger is known to be one of the basic emotions, present from infancy onward. It can be viewed as feeling, as behavior, or as communication; it can be expressed or not expressed; it can be communicated directly or indirectly. As feeling, anger is a natural reaction to strong frustration, conflict, to a threat to the integrity of the self or as one of the reactions to loss and hurt. As behavior, the action of anger can be expressed in either hurting or nonhurting ways. Shaking one's fist, yelling, swearing are essentially nonhurting acts (they have, however, impact); kicking, punching and slapping someone are hurting acts of anger. In the communication of anger, one is sharing or revealing that one is experiencing irritation but not that the other is to blame or the cause of the irritation. It is accepting responsibility for what one feels. It is also a caring act to reveal oneself and may be a way of obtaining self-affirmation.

Anger appears to be confused in peoples' minds with hostility and violence. Hostility is a result of anger not being directly expressed or received; it is a thwarting of the natural expression of anger. Violence, I see as the acting out or the direct expression of hostility. The aim of anger and hostility are quite different. The aim of anger is basically to discharge the feeling in a way that lets another person know what one is experiencing. Anger is a warm emotion that wants impact or contact, not hurt. The aims of hostility are hurt and destruction and may be experienced as "cold" anger. If impact occurs, the anger feeling will be released; there will be no need to hurt. Block off this direct expression and you encourage indirect or hostile ways of it being expressed.

I should clarify that when I speak of anger, I am referring to a family of feelings in which the intensity ranges from mild to very strong. We traditionally use different terms to express the intensity: annoyance, irritation, resentment, anger, fury, rage. There are several determinants

of the intensity of anger we experience in any situation. Besides the reality of the anger provoking situation, we have the psychological well-being of the individual. The more pressure or stress we are under, the more we are inclined to a stronger reaction. Another determinant is the similarity of the "trigger" incident or situation to anger producing situations in the past. A third determinant is the degree of build-up we have in our anger reservoir, our slush fund of unexpressed anger feelings, many of which stem from childhood.

Perhaps the commonest way of handling anger, especially annoyances and resentments, is by attempting to avoid or deny awareness of them. When we do not experience the sesation or impulse, we do not have to deal with it directly. However the results of such avoidance behavior are many:

1. There can become a generalized emotional insensitivity to other feelings. Blocking off one feeling leads to a deadening of the experiences of other feelings.

2. An inability to express anger reflects a lack of inner freedom which is reflected in our sense of adequacy and competence and may be involved in self-sabotage behavior and the setting of unrealistic self-goals.

3. The avoidance of the experiencing and expression of minor irritations leads to the all too familiar hurting or attacking "blow ups," which are often triggered by very small incidents such as a button not being sewed on.

4. Unexpressed anger, besides leading to indirect expression in gossip and some forms of humor and teasing, seems to be a feeling which is very readily converted to body symptoms (especially the muscles). It appears to be involved in muscular tension, certain kinds of headaches, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcers, and some over eating and sexual problems. It is involved, but again in a complex manner, with anxiety, depressions, apathy, fatigue, withdrawal, fear, and boredom.

5. Within relationships, nonexpression of anger may lead to avoidance of contact or acting out; it may serve as an effective block to the development of intimacy and a fuller realization of the potential of the relationship.

The main point I am trying to make is that unexpressed anger is involved in a great deal of dysfunctioning both individually and interpersonally.

At this point, I want to list some of the more common but ineffective ways of coping with anger:

1. Denial
   —"it's not reasonable," "it's inappropriate (or childish, immature, unacceptable)."

   —"I'm not angry, but tired (or hurt or disappointed)"

   —laughing it off or smiling it away

2. Substitution
   —replacing the angry feeling/thought with a pleasant one

3. Projection
   —seeing someone else as being angry

4. Handling it indirectly
   —being "nice" at all times

   —controlling others so it is difficult for them to become angry

   —sulking, gossiping, teasing others

How can one learn to express anger effectively? I suggest there are four basic steps in this process:

1. become aware of it
2. experience it
3. express it
4. communicate it

Awareness

Awareness involves becoming more aware of:

a. the range of anger feelings we experience (from momentary annoyance to blind rage)
b. the range of situations in which we experience anger
c. the range of ways of expression that we feel comfortable with

There are many exercises which can assist in this process of awareness; some of these are:

1. List down the known situations in which you experience annoyance, anger
2. Chart for a week the frequency of your feelings of anger and their intensity

3. Note the time period between the anger provoking situation and your awareness of the feeling; what is the time period between your awareness of your experiencing of the feeling?

4. Observe how others "leak out" anger indirectly (hostility)

5. How large is your reservoir or slush fund of anger? How do you know?

Experiencing

When one is aware of one's anger, an obvious solution to certain anger provoking situations is to avoid them or prevent the build-up frustrations. In doing so, the importance of self-awareness, self-understanding cannot be stressed enough. For example, one may be outraged by one's neighbor for no apparent reason. By recognizing that one is "loading-in" from one's slush fund of past angers, it may be possible to trace back to the past anger, to re-experience it, to express it in some way and to resolve it. Thus, the anger to the neighbor dissipates.

Again, some anger provoking situations may be avoided through negotiating the specific issues with the other person involved and arriving at a change in the behavior involved or an acceptance of the behavior based on a greater understanding of what it means to the other person.

However, no matter how effective the above approaches are for not creating anger-producing situations, there will always be incidents in which you become angry (irritated, annoyed) and there is the need to learn how to experience and express this feeling. This is so whether you see anger as a feeling to be expressed in order to avoid the negative features of unexpressed anger or whether you see anger as a potentially positive, enlivening, relationship enhancing, fun experience.

How do you experience anger? Where does it make itself felt within your body? Dr. D. Casriel has presented the concept of levels of anger related to the areas of the body where it is experienced. Thus:

Intellectual level—"head" awareness, rarely satisfyingly experienced

Riddance level—throat area, experienced as "get away from me"; quickly discharged

Murderous level—chest area, experienced as "I hate you and would like to kill you"; also neutralized through feeling expression

Identity level—total body involvement, experienced as "don't you ever do that to me again"; may require some time and several re-experiencings to be finally neutralized

It becomes very important then, to become aware of how various levels of anger are expressed within our bodies. Two of the best exercises which can assist in this process of experiencing are:

1. With your eyes closed, recall an incident from your recent or distant past in which you were (irritated, angry, furious). Re-experience this incident, attempting to get back into the feelings that were aroused. Let the feelings and the experience flow. When the experience is rounded out, recall body signals of anger which you experienced. Pay particular attention to legs, arms, hands, stomach, chest, throat, temples, and neck.

2. When you become aware of having been angry, during your day-to-day life, recall where the anger made itself felt within your body. Over a period of time, note how differently you uniquely experience different levels of anger within your body.

I want to stress the fact that if you permit yourself to actually experience the feeling of anger, it will decrease. Feelings in part get resolved through experiencing. Minor irritation may be neutralized in this manner. Stronger feelings of anger will require expression.

Expression

In discussing the experiencing of anger, I commented upon the role of avoidance in dealing with anger-provoking situations. It is important now to consider how anger may be safely and effectively expressed when it is experienced.

Anger like any feeling is transitory. If you follow any feeling you will find it follows a natural course; there is a process of emotional logic which a feeling follows. This can be described as having four components; awareness, experiencing, expression, and acceptance (integration). Some irritations, such as that which could arise through being held up in traffic, can quickly be resolved through sticking with the feeling, expressing the annoyance (e.g., swearing), and allowing the resolution (acceptance) to occur. Stronger irritations may require several sequences or rounds of following through, while others, especially those related to childhood experiences or intense threats to one's integrity will only be resolved through much repeated re-working. These seem to occur in a spiral pattern, with each round being different in some way from the previous one. The human system can only take so much strong emotion, hence the need to have repeat cycles. Often when a minor irritation seems to call forth much more feeling than the situation warrants, we are dealing with the phenomena of "loading into" or

displacement. This may be a displacement from other events of the day, or a displacement from historic incidences whose feeling energy are currently in the conscious or preconscious areas of the self.

In expressing anger initially, there are two important points to make. First, there will be a natural way for your body to want to express anger. How do you want to naturally express feelings of anger—with your hands, your feet, your whole body? It is important to become familiar with the physical ways which give yourself satisfaction. Second, it is initially important to separate the feelings of anger from the words used in anger. The feeling of anger does not hurt. It may be mildly scary or upsetting, but it does not hurt.

Some exercises for learning a range of ways to express anger are:

1. Try by using your voice, though not in words, to make low intensity angry growls, "rude" noises
2. Make facial grimaces, distortions, which express anger
3. Physically sculpture yourself into a position which expresses your feelings
4. Express your anger to a partner using jibberish, trying to put as much feeling into the expression as possible
5. Try kicking, stomping, hitting a pillow, smashing a cushion
6. Use a towel-fantasize that it is someone you are furious with, squeeze it, choke it, etc.

Communication

Minor irritations can often be resolved through expression, as desired above. Anger which arises in relation to another's behavior usually requires communication before it can be resolved. The term "communication" implies the active involvement of two people.

Interactionally, then, the expression of anger, depending upon the intensity, requires either:

(a) to be heard and understood

(b) to be expressed through contact, which requires the element of resistance

The most effective way of frustrating someone, of making them furious, is to be reasonable, and "mature" when the other needs to have a resistance contact. Expressing anger to a "cream puff" is most

unsatisfactory, since the "cream puff" attitude carries the implication that your behavior is unreasonable or not to be taken seriously. This is essentially a dehumanization and is often the basis of hostile fighting.

While the goal of hostility is to hurt your opponent, the goal of anger release is to have contact, to be heard, to have impact, to connect. Usually when we get into an anger exchange with others, we hide the fact that they are reaching us; this intensifies the onslaught and we develop "dirty" or hurtful approaches in retaliation.

We have, however, to establish interaction safeties through which an anger communication can occur without people experiencing the feeling of being "hurt." The key principle I employ here is that anger communication is not a blaming, not a "laying on," nor a projecting or manipulating but rather it is a sharing, a disclosing, a revealing of what I am experiencing. By laying on, blaming, etc. you are in effect placing yourself in a superior position to the other, in which you are saying that you have the ability and authority to establish what is reality for the other person.

By sharing what you are experiencing, you are saying that this is your experience and to accept it at face value. If I say I am experiencing annoyance with my wife, Gwen, because she has failed to get dinner ready on time, I am sharing what I feel. Because I feel it, it is experientially valid and I have a right to share this with her. Likewise, she has a right and in fact the necessity of not taking this as a personal assault, or a reflection on herself. If she can hear this as an expression of "where I am at" with no intention of blaming her or asking for her to be different, she and I do not get caught up in a purposeless entanglement and we have developed the ability to share our resentments before they build. Gwen's behavior here illustrates what is meant by the term "not taking on."

How then, can anger be safely communicated? Some of the ways are:

> Nonverbally—nonspecific angers or frustrations can be expressed bodily with the other person through pushing, shoving, etc. with hands, shoulders, hips—whatever is agreed upon. This can also be very helpful for people who have difficulty expressing feelings verbally.
>
> Simple expression—in order to avoid "laying on" or having the other "take on," it is essential that anger communications be in the "I" form. There are three ways of expressing "I" statements:

(a) direct statement
I am annoyed ---
I feel irritated over ---
I feel furious with ---

(b) describing what it is like experientially
I am shaking inside over ---
I'm boiling inside because ---

(c) describing what your action fantasy is
I feel like hitting, kicking, etc.

Resentment expression—many specific annoyances can be expressed directly as resentments. The resentment exercise can be of real value in learning anger expression in several ways:

(a) It helps the expresser to become more aware of the strength of his feelings

(b) It helps the receiver learn not "to take on"

(c) It offers satisfaction and self-affirmation in hearing the receiver repeat it back

The resentment exercise involves: stating the resentment in the form of "I" statements; placing a fantasy demand on the other, which expresses the strength of the resentment and which acts as a signal to the receiver to not take it on; listening to the resentment and demand being repeated back in as close to the original wording as possible.

Fighting

As nonverbal expression may or may not require the element of resistance, likewise verbal communication may or may not require the element of resistance. When no resistance is needed, the resentment format is quite satisfactory. When the verbal format is requiring the resistance (impact, contact) element, we usually call this fighting.

Again, there are fair and hurting ways of fighting. A fair fight is essentially an impact fight in which the goal is to experience one's own power and force against the other. It is a self-affirming experience in which there are no losers but in which both come out with the feeling of having won or of having received something from the interchange.

I have at this point developed three levels of fair fighting:

(a) The explosive fight: one in which clearing of feeling, not change, is the goal. One need not even listen to the words or thought content of the other, since the purpose of the fight is to clear feelings and to have contact with does not hurt. Words in essence become vehicles for the transmission of feelings. Hence, name-calling, yelling, shouting become suitable formats if you feel comfortable with this. It is necessary, as with all fight formats, to determine from your partner the issues, words, and terms which hurt and which do not hurt. All of us have sensitivities and these must be respected and not used in a fight experience

(b) Beginning articulation in a fight: one in which the anger provoking issue is clear, in which the person is able to use power and words to explain his issue, his point of view. He does not attack or blame but powerfully makes his viewpoint known

(c) Advanced articulation: this is the fair fight taken to its most developed point; that is, one in which the issue is focused, specific, realistic, objective. As this level the fight for change format may begin to be used

The role of fights in any relationship (fair fights) can be powerful in clearing feelings, in opening up new and unexplored areas, in removing from a couple that awful dread of a battle. When fighting is no longer an anxiety issue, there is a strong sense of relationship freedom. It may be of interest to note that the freer one becomes in expressing anger, the less frequently one seems to need to use it. When one becomes comfortable with a skill interpersonally, it no longer dominates one's emotional existence and the person is freed to move on to other areas.

Three Final Points

1. Because most of us have learned and experienced hurting, destructive, dehumanizing ways of anger expression, there is a process of re-learning we must undergo before we can experience the positive aspects of anger.

2. In learning anger expression, find the level that you are comfortable with and work from there.

3. Use those exercises that give relief than those exercises that stir up more feelings. In other words, work with rather than against yourself.

It is my strong conviction at this point, that the effect of anger needs to be expressed for the riddance or elimination of the potential negative effects of bottling up this emotion. This feeling can be either expressed or communicated for its clearance function. There is also a growth or actualization function of the effect of anger, just as there is with any other feeling. With comfort in handling this emotion, tapping into our built-up reservoir (slush fund) can provide us with additional energy and mobilization. Just as one does not have to have a reason to be happy, one does not have to have a reason to be angry. The desire or need to experience this feeling state is sufficient. I suppose I am making a strong plea to re-examine our conventional ideas about anger, to remove it from the dark ages of inquiry and to explore and expand its potential for a more fulfilling existence.

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

(Dilemma, Invention, Feedback, Generalization)

The primary purpose of this class is to learn how to learn. We are not talking about the kind of learning we are used to in school, memorizing facts or formulas, etc., but learning more about ourselves, the reasons we do things, our effect on others and their effect on us, how we solve problems, and how effectively we solve problems. By problems we mean any kind of a problem we might encounter or any decision we have to make. These are things few of us have learned. They usually are not taught in school.

We hope to gain new insights and understandings about ourselves, about others, and about our relationships with others. From this we hope to develop new personal problem solving skills and interpersonal social skills that will enable us to live and work more effectively.

Relearning how to learn. Most of our experience in and out of school has taught us that we learn by listening to authorities, by having someone who knows it all tell us what he knows, what we should do, and how we should do it. We memorize what he tells us and he tests us to see how well we have learned what he has told us.

This kind of learning is necessary, of course, but we need to learn also how to learn from our own experiences. Contrary to popular opinion, experience is not a very good teacher, unless we know how to learn from our own experiences. Contrary to popular opinion, experience is not a very good teacher, unless we know how to learn from experience. Very few of us do. We go on making the same mistakes over and over. The chief aim of this class is, then, to provide the participants an opportunity to learn how to learn from their own experiences.

Problems will be created for you to solve, and you will create many problems for yourselves. Your first dilemma (problem) will be when you find yourselves in a group without a teacher or a leader to tell you what to do. You will have to decide what to do in many of your meetings and how to do it. You will feel that it is a waste of time and it will be some time before you understand what is going on.

The Conventional Versus the Group Method to Learning

Classroom Method	Group Method
1. Teacher tells, demonstrates	1. Students face a dilemma—created by the teacher or the student or both

2. Students listen, practice drill according to the coaching of the instructor	2. Students act to solve the dilemma by experimenting, inventing, discovering, by testing various alternatives
3. Teacher tests the students	3. Students do feedback evaluation of their own and others actions and reactions
4. Teacher accepts or rejects the students by grading, etc.	4. Students and teacher retest and recycle into the next learning phase, if more experimentation is necessary, and generalize to other problems and situations

Conditions for Learning

This class is designed to create the following conditions, which are felt to be necessary if the individual is to achieve his goals of improvement and change in insights, understandings, sensitivities, and skills:

1. Exposure. We must have an opportunity to reveal or expose the way we see things, our attitudes, values, and beliefs, and the way we act and react, before we can learn anything regarding their validity or effectiveness

2. Feedback. We need information from others about their perceptions, observations, or reactions to our behavior so that we can determine whether it is effective or appropriate, and change or correct it if it is not. This information is feedback. It allows us to examine the consequences of our behavior

3. Atmosphere. At atmosphere of freedom from fear or criticism, ridicule, punishment, or retaliation is necessary for people to be willing to expose their behavior and intentions and to give and accept feedback. We need an atmosphere of support, where people are helping one another learn how to learn.

4. Experimentation. The trying out or testing of new patterns of thinking or behavior must become the accepted practice of this class so that we can try something new when we learn that what we were doing or thinking was not effective or appropriate. This means we must be tolerant of mistakes, because not everything we try will work.

5. Practice. When we find something that works we have to practice using it, so that we can become comfortable and secure in its use, develop our skill in using it.

6. Generalization or Application. Unless the new learning and change can be applied to back home or outside situations, they are not very affective or lasting. Attention must be given to helping one another generalize, to plan application of the learnings.

The Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Generalization Theory of Learning

1. Dilemma. A dilemma is any situation where a person is not sure what he should do. It is a new situation, thus old solutions and previous ways of behaving may not fit. We try to find our way out of dilemma in many ways: (1) We may behave as though the new situation were like the old one and use an old solution that really is not appropriate or effective. (2) We make seek advice, look for an "expert" to tell us what to do. (3) We may do nothing, hoping the problem will go away. (4) We may become "defensive," and try to deny that a problem exists. (5) We may go into "flight" trying to run away from the problem. (6) Or, we may begin to search, to explore, possibly to invent or try to discover new approaches to the solution of the dilemma.

2. Invention. Invention is encouraged when conventional or traditional solutions and procedures are no longer adequate to deal with a situation. Now people are ready to think, to shed old notions, to experiment and explore to see whether new ones can be found that will work. The period when old behavior is being abandoned and new behavior has not yet been invented or accepted to replace it is referred to as an "unfrozen" period. It is surrounded by uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. It is a period when there is likely to be criticism, accusation, attack, withdrawal, flight, and defensiveness. This is why the free and supportive atmosphere of this class is so important.

3. Feedback. Feedback is the method by which people let one another know the effectiveness or appropriateness of their ideas and behavior. It is information about actions and reactions, about the way one person acts and another reacts. It requires considerable practice to learn how to give and receive feedback.

4. Generalization. The last step in the process is that of examining the situation and the results of experimentation and feedback to see whether anything has been learned that could be applied in other situations. When this is done in this class, participants are searching to see whether what appeared to work in this class might work in outside situations.

GROUP COUNSELING: APPLYING THE TECHNIQUE

Charles F. Combs, Benjamin Cohn,
Edward J. Gibian, and A. Mead Sniffin

The authors have recently conducted a series of experimental projects which were designed to demonstrate the values of group counseling as a technique to be used within the framework of the usual public school. They worked in practical situations in regular school buildings and within the limits of the usual school curriculum. From these experiences certain common patterns of procedure relating to the use of group counseling have become apparent. The writers would like to share these ideas with others who may consider utilizing this technique in schools.

Elsewhere, the authors have dealt with the rationale of group counseling in dealing with the difficult or troubled student. The technique of group counseling is often the most feasible tool available to the counselor in reaching this type of student. It seems to be especially effective when applied to adolescents. Many studies have emphasized the importance of a peer group to the adolescent; the concept of group counseling capitalizes on this peer group identification.

Group counseling is a social process. The persons involved approach problems at their own speed within the safety of a social setting. Here they may explore problems which are of importance to them within the security of a group which shares their problems and with whom they identify. Moreover, they may do this without fear of external direction or the pressure of adult coercion. The adult who is experienced by them within the group is an adult in a new role—the helpful, non-judgmental, non-threatening adult.

In addition to the advantages of approaching the problem from within the framework of the secure peer society, group counseling offers to the school the attractiveness of an efficient use of the counselor's time, energy, and influence for dealing with personal problems. This technique may allow the counselor to work with greater numbers of those students whom the school often experiences as most needing help or presenting the greatest threat to smooth school operation.

The counseling pattern to be used in any particular school must be tailored to the school system in which it is to be applied. A counseling program must always meet the needs of the framework within which it exists. If it does not meet these needs, it will soon cease to exist. Counseling must be experienced, then, as being helpful not only to the students but also to the administrators and, particularly, to the teachers of the students who are being counseled. Involvement of administration

and faculty will avoid the hazards of a counseling program that may otherwise be viewed by these people as capricious or threatening to them. They should be drawn into the formation of the group counseling program and there should be continual feedback in order to maintain a high level of involvement.

Selection of Students for Group Counseling

The classroom teachers must be made to feel that they are active participants in the selection of students as candidates for the group. The opinions and reactions of the faculty and administrators are extremely valuable to the counselor in identifying those students who may be disruptive or who are grossly underachieving, or who are for some other reason of deep concern to the school.

Likely candidates for group counseling may also be identified by studying school records. For instance, if the purpose of the proposed group is to deal with the disruptive or disorderly, school records will often have valuable indications of such previous difficulties. If the basic presenting problem is underachievement, candidates may be identified in terms of differences between measured capacity and achievement, or teachers' recorded comments of classroom difficulty.

Forming a Group

It is important in a new or formative program that the groups be carefully balanced. The members of a group should have a common presenting problem, but they should also have different levels or degrees of the problem. The counselor who attempts to institute a group counseling program by establishing a group composed only of the most severe and recalcitrant persons who present a particular problem is almost assuredly foredoomed to disappointment. The members of the projected group should be selected in terms of presenting mild as well as severe evidences of a particular problem.

The composition of a group will also be determined by the maturity of its members. It must be borne in mind, in this respect, that groups having both boys and girls will present certain special types of problems. For instance, on the junior high school level, in the same age range, there may be wide variations in maturity of the two sexes and their psychosocial readiness to discuss certain issues.

In the final analysis, of course, the composition of the group will, to a large extent, be predetermined by the period during the day that prospective members will be available.

Since group counseling is, insofar as possible, non-coercive—the composition of the group will depend upon the identification of the members with each other and with the counselor. As groups are instituted and as members experience success and satisfaction in exploring and meeting their needs within the group, other students will hear of them and will be found to volunteer for those and for future groups.

Size of the Group

The size of the group will depend on several major factors: the maturity of the students who are being considered for the projected group, the level of adjustment that they present, and the topic to be discussed.

The authors feel that elementary school children are less capable of deferring their actions and reactions than are older children. The elementary age child seems to be neither as verbal nor as group-oriented as the junior high or secondary school student. Therefore, a small group of four to six seems to afford these younger children a better opportunity to interact with their peers and to gain social experience than they would find in a larger group. The counselor must also be a more active group member with this age child than with older students.

At the junior high and secondary school levels, the authors feel that the optimal size is six to eight students, depending upon the students and the topic or purpose for which they will be meeting. The more aggressive or anti-social or anti-school the attitudes of the group members, the lower the number which can be easily handled within the group. In a group of eight, each member seems to have an opportunity to talk and yet also to listen or to be less active when he wishes.

As the group size increases, the number of its interactions seems to increase geometrically. Beyond ten members the number of interactions definitely hampers the progress of the group. The authors have found that, in counseling with acting-out or aggressive students, even a group of eight is often too large, and that six seems to be a more practical size.

The Physical Setting

Group counseling in regular school buildings must, of necessity, use existing facilities. One of the appeals of this technique is that it does not require a glorified setting and can be easily adapted to what is available. The authors have successfully conducted group counseling in regular classrooms, locker rooms, store rooms, cafeterias, stages of auditoriums, conference rooms, and small offices.

Ideally, the room where the students meet should be as plain as possible. The optimum room size for a group of six to eight students seems to be about 15' x 15', with a round or square table having seating capacity of approximately ten people. There should be enough room between members of the group so that, while they can readily communicate with all of their neighbors, they are not in such close proximity to others that they can be tempted into diversionary horseplay. It is also highly desirable to have a soundproof or isolated room so that any noise of the group will not disturb the rest of the school.

When working with students having academic difficulties it is also important that there be as little distraction as possible. The room should be small enough so that the individual cannot readily back away from the group or walk about the room in a manner that would be distracting to the other members of the group. While groups are meeting, the central office should be requested to cut off the public address system and telephone calls to the room.

Length of Session

At the junior high school and secondary school level, the length of group counseling sessions will usually be determined by the length of the class period. In the elementary school, the class periods will not comprise as great a complication. The authors feel that group counseling sessions are most effective when they are of 35 to 45 minutes duration. Sessions lasting less than 30 to 35 minutes do not seem to allow a group to approach and develop topics. On the other hand, sessions which last longer than 45 minutes may result in boredom.

Initiating Counseling

There are certain techniques which may be of help to the beginning group counselor who is concerned about the important step of initiating the counseling sessions. A sample of an initial structuring might go somewhat as follows:

> "I think we all know each other. We are going to meet during this period, in this room, every week for the next _____ weeks. We're going to be getting together to try to solve problems that we all share. Everyone in this group, for instance, seems to have a lot more ability than is actually being used. Somehow, something is getting in the way and keeping each one of us from being all that we can. We are going to be meeting together to try to find out what some of these reasons are and what we can do to solve them."

"While we are here in this group we are going to talk about anything that is of concern to us. We can say anything we want in any way that we want. Obviously there are going to be some limits. We don't want to disrupt the rest of the school, and of course we can't destroy any of the equipment in this room—or each other, for that matter. But other than these limits, I want you to feel free to express yourselves in any way you like."

"What we say in this group is our business. Nothing we say here is to be told to anyone outside of the group by you or by me. No one else is going to know what goes on here—that's our business. I am here to work with you and perhaps help you to work through the problems as you see them. I don't have the answers to your problems, but together we may be able to work something out which will help us all. We must all work together; we must all try to understand each other."

"Okay, who would like to begin ?"

The authors have also found that very definite "Rules of the Game" can assist group members in adjusting to the new situation. Certain of the authors for instance, have found it useful to distribute mimeographed material to the members of the group, somewhat as follows:

Rules of the Game

1. Group counseling is a cooperative job. We must all work together to help each other solve problems.

2. We can't solve problems if we refuse to look at them honestly. Let's try not to let our previous ideas get in our way.

3. Try to really listen to what the person next to you is saying. Don't try to convince him that you are right. Listen to what he says, just as you expect him to listen to you when you have something to say.

4. Stick with a topic; don't get side-tracked. Wait until the rest of the people seem to be willing to let a topic rest for a while before you try to change it.

5. Speak whenever you have something to say. Don't be afraid to speak up even if what you have to say isn't particularly clear in your mind. But on the other hand, be careful not to cover up what you mean by saying too much.

6. One of the best ways you can help the others is to let them know that they are not alone in what they feel. If you have experienced the same feeling, tell them. You may be surprised to find that you will be able to understand more about the way you feel as you find yourself talking to others about how they feel.

7. Don't feel that you have to come to a group solution or agreement. The purpose of the group is to explore problems together. The decision that you as a person come to must be your own. The only solutions that are good for you must be those that have a personal meaning for you. Someone else's answer may not apply to the way you feel.

8. A group discussion goes along best when everybody trusts each other. Be careful that the others don't feel that you are making fun of them. If you are going to work together and solve problems, you're going to have to trust each other. The more quickly you get to know the others and they get to know you, the more quickly this group is going to "pay off" for you.

The Group Counseling Atmosphere

The group counseling situation must be a permissive one. There must be an openness to all of those experiences which can and should be explored within the framework of the educational setting. The counselor must be experienced by the students as an accepting and facilitating adult. However, he must also remember that he is operating within a school framework and that there are certain limits and restrictions by which the group must abide. Permissiveness does not mean anarchy.

These limits which are observed must be those which are really necessary to the functioning of the group. Children and adolescents find that the security in the periodic restructuring of the group and of its aims. This often enables them to abandon courses of action which they may have already begun to experience as largely unrewarding.

The control of the topics to be explored should be in the hands of the students. It should be their decision to change the subject of discussion, and if necessary to reorganize the group. The problems presented by the group should be explored, where possible, in terms of generalized, rather than specific, situations. The boy who presents the group with a specific problem about one certain teacher should find the group discussing behavior of teachers and pupils in general. The counselor must be careful, when clarifying a specifically presented problem, to re-present it in its more general framework.

The counselor must continually attempt to draw out the members of the group, and he must be aware of the feelings of the counselees and to reflect these feelings to the group. The counselor serves as a catalyst. He clarifies the statements that the group makes and the feelings expressed by them. He reflects these feelings in a way that allows each member to examine more clearly the topics in terms of his own feelings, and assists them to explore jointly their feelings. Thus he crystallizes feelings and meanings.

The authors have found that members of the group seem to have built-in controls for the depth of the problem they are willing to explore. A topic will be handled only if the group feels it can actually deal with and solve the problem. When the group or particular members feel beyond their depth or not yet prepared to deal with a subject, progress may be effectively blocked by their lack of participation or their changing the subject. Restlessness, resistiveness, aggression, or hostility often appear at this point.

If the counselor pushes the group too fast toward a particular solution or even toward a particular problem, the group will usually try to stop him and give indications that he is losing them. If he responds to these signs and slows down or stops and allows the group once again to assume control and catch their breath, psychologically, the group will usually move ahead rapidly.

The counselor must always seek to respond to the true feelings underlying the statement that the counselees make. He must not fall into the trap of responding to the content of what the students say or, worse yet, to his own needs and attitudes toward these problems.

The authors are studying the effects of group counseling with under-achieving, acting-out junior high school students. Their current research is supported partially by funds from the U. S. Office of Education (Cooperative Research Branch, Project D-040). Dr. Benjamin Cohn is Principal Investigator of this project, with Dr. Charles F. Combs, Mr. Edward Gibian, and Dr. A. Mead Sniffen as Co-Investigators. Through this and similar projects they hope to demonstrate that group counseling is an effective educational technique for helping underachievers in the typical school setting.

FREEING AND BINDING RESPONSES*

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If you will look on the chart on "Psychological Intimacy" which I handed out yesterday, you will notice that the last category refers to the degree of coercion in the relationship. The point is made that to the extent that the other person is seen as himself and not just as a projection of your needs and interests, to the extent that you are able to see that because he has to face the consequences of his decisions he must be the one who makes the decisions, there is less coercion in the relationship and consequently the relationship is a more intimate one. This morning what I would like to talk about refers primarily to that lower category.

I would like you to imagine continuum that ranges from responses that I call "freeing" responses to, on the other extreme, responses that I call "binding" responses. I am going to start out with a very general, global description of these two contrasting kinds of responses. I'll then give some examples in which I will ask you to feel whether the response would be freeing or binding to you and then I will attempt to list some of the kinds of responses which are freeing and binding. If time remains, I will examine praise in detail to show how we overlook its binding properties.

I am making the assumption that freeing responses will result in a growth producing relationship, and that's the reason I use the term freeing. It frees the other individual to grow. The key criterion is that the person who experiences the response feels that he can change or not change as he pleases. He is not bound or frozen to a position he has taken today; tomorrow if he feels differently this will be all right. In short, he is free to be spontaneous, to be himself. Freeing responses often increase the number of opportunities known to the person on which he can take action. They may increase the number of interpretations that he is aware of so that they broaden his field of information. Freeing responses emphasize the present. By and large, they do not go too heavily to the past or future. To deal too heavily with the past is to bind him to his past. Freeing responses reflect the assumption that the other person can be self-guiding, self-governing, if (and this the key assumption) he receives appropriate information about the effects of his behavior upon other people. In short, if a person shows signs of maladjustment or of unhappiness or of inability to cope with situations, we assume that he has not had adequate information about the effect of his behavior on others. In short, he has had too little knowledge of results. As you

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well know, if a child attempts to learn algebra and he is never told whether his problems are correct or not, it will be almost impossible for him to learn to solve problems correctly. He has to have knowledge of results.

Freeing responses treat feelings as normal, natural events that are neither right or wrong. Feelings that exist are facts. Thus, feelings do not need justification, defense, or rationalization. Feelings do not create an obligation or a requirement that the other person change. We have so much trouble with feelings because most of us see them as coercive. If we are angry, we see it as "the other person ought to change" and not just that "I am angry." We also see feelings of love as coercive. If I have strong feelings of love or affection for somebody I feel they are under obligation to me in some way. We continually confuse our own feelings with the state of the world. When you use freeing responses you are able to distinguish which are your feelings and which are the conditions of the world around you. Feelings, in short, are the state of a person and not demands upon the world. You recall the example, when I talked about riding with my wife and I became frightened at the speed we were going. I had to recognize that my statement, when I said, "I am frightened," was not a demand on her. This was a statement of my internal situation. And as I said, it was very pleasing to me that she was enough concerned about my internal state to slow down. But if she had continued driving fast I would have had to accept the fact that at that time she didn't care whether I was frightened or not, and that would be realistic. Many different criteria point up freeing responses.

Binding responses, by contrast, are those that obstruct or limit change. They do this by decreasing alternatives for movement, change, or growth. I call them binding responses because they bind the individual in any of a number of ways. For instance, they attempt to tie him to consistency with his past. "Well, that's not what you said yesterday." A clear example of binding response. If he's on his toes, he will say, "So what." The point is that I must evaluate the situation in terms of the information I have available now. Yesterday I did not have today's information. So if yesterday, I said, "This is a lousy group" and today I say, "I think this is a great group," and somebody says, "Well, that's not what you said yesterday," he is then attempting to freeze me to a position I took yesterday and not allow me to grow or change.

Another kind of bond is the bond of obligation to the speaker. Parents use this. "You ought to be very grateful to me." "Well, if you do that, it's quite obvious that you don't really appreciate what I've done for you." So we try to control the way the child changes by binding him through obligation to us.

Another bond is expectation of the future. "Well, you'd just better give up smoking." A more binding statement than, "You'd better" is "I know that you're anxious to." When the teacher says to the children, "I know that you're all going to be very quiet today," I would say she's binding them so that if they are not quiet, they have then been inconsistent. Now it's a far different thing if she were to express her desire that they be quiet for certain reasons, but when she doesn't indicate it's her desire but says, "I know you will all be," she creates a different kind of relationship. To get back to the example of the driving, if I say, "I am frightened at driving this fast on a wet pavement," this is a response that allows the other person to do as they please. By contrast, I might say to my wife, "I know that you're as concerned as I am about automobile safety and I'm sure that you're going to slow down soon." What would your reaction be if you were in that position. You see the irritation and resentment that could arouse? Because immediately I have put her under my control. I have indicated, "You are merely an object that I'm going to manipulate."

Binding responses thus often lead the other to feel that his actions are controlled by the speaker, that he is not free to make up his own mind, and that he is not carrying out his own intentions. They reflect the assumption that the other person cannot be self-governing. All of us want to be self-governing. Here's a simple example. You have company in for the evening. You decide that it would be nice at the time to have some cookies and coffee for refreshment, so you excuse yourself from the living room. You go out to the kitchen, you are preparing it, and then you hear your husband's voice calling, "Oh, dear, I think it would be awfully nice if we could have some cookies and coffee now." What's your first reaction? Probably a twinge of irritation. What do you say? Do you say, "That's an excellent idea!" No, probably you say, "That's what I'm doing." Now why do you say, "That's what I'm doing." It's an effort to keep control of your own behavior. If you say, "That's a good idea," YOU have adopted a submissive role, you have now put yourself in the position of the controlled object, you are now carrying out his behavior. So we usually say, "That's just what I'm going to do."

Or have you ever had the experience that I've had when I say to my little daughter, "You know, your room is very dirty. It ought to be cleaned up." She answers, "I know it." What does this mean? "I feel coerced; I feel you're taking control of my behavior, I want to be in control of myself."

Binding responses treat feelings as disruptive, as unfortunate events that need justification, rationalization, and control, and feelings are classified as good or bad, as right or wrong.

If you would focus on your feelings just a moment, I want you to identify with the wife in the following situation. The husband has attempted to tell the wife time after time that she's too wishy-washy; she's too submissive; she doesn't know how to say no. Each of you, as the wife, has now described an incident in which you did not act in your usual indecisive fashion. Then you say, "You see, I did make a decision and stick to it. I'm not always wishy-washy." That's what you've just said. I want to know whether you would feel that his response to that was a freeing one or a binding one, if your husband said, "Well, you usually give in." Binding, I would suggest. I'm not attempting to prompt you to give me answers that I already know, I'm merely asking you to check your experience with the answers that I would give and see whether it goes together or not. I would say binding because it's an effort to tie the individual to consistency with the past.

Once again imagine you've said, "See I can make a decision and stick to it. I'm not always wishy-washy." Then your husband says, "Well, I'm glad I'm finally getting you to use your backbone." Binding. He's is taking credit for your behavior.

Or he says, "Yes, and I can see you feel quite good about it too." I would see this is a freeing response reflecting your feelings of pride and indicating it is your feeling of pride and not having to argue with it.

Or he might say, "Good, and I know you will keep it up." Binding. He is levying an expectation upon you.

Or, "Aren't you glad I've insisted all along that you learn to say no." Binding.

Or, he might say, "Yes, you <u>were</u> firm weren't you." A freeing response which indicates this is the situation as this time with no expectations about the future.

Or, "I feel very glad that you've found out that you could." Well, this is kind of in between. It is technically a freeing kind of response because he recorded his own feeling. But unless the relationship is an easy one it might be seen as coercive.

Or after you've said, "You see I did make a decision and stick to it, I'm not always wishy-washy." he says, "Oh, incidently did you return that defective chair to the store today?" This is a binding response not only because it changes the subject, but it changes the subject in a way which leads you to feel he is now saying, "Well you don't always do it."

Let's take another example. You have just come up to a supervisor or a principal to say about a practice teacher, "Somehow I just can't bring

myself to tell Joe how bad his work is. He's such a nice guy. But I can't let this go on much longer because it's playing havoc with the children." Suppose that's what you've said. The other person says to you, "Well, I guess you feel pretty torn by this—pulled two ways?" I would see this as a freeing response which allows you to express either side. You have expressed both sides. Suppose the person said, "Put your sentiment aside. You got to get action to protect those kids." He limits your freedom to explore the situation and this is binding. Or, "Well, I know that you're a very good supervisor. I know that you'll be able to get it across to Joe. You can be firm." Expectations and thus a binding response. Or, "Well, what are the various alternatives open to you?" A freeing response that says, "Let's look at this, there are no limits on it."

"Is there anything you would like me to do that would be helpful?" Freeing response because it indicates that I'm a resource, I am not passing judgment, I am not binding you to any set of expectations.

Or, "You're too wishy-washy, you're going to have to get some backbone." This is a binding response because you probably won't explore the alternatives in this situation.

Or, "Well, it's your fault for letting it go so long. You wouldn't be in this spot if you had told him when you first noticed." Binding.

"You want to take care of the children's needs, but you don't want to hurt Joe, is that it?" That's a freeing response. It recognizes both sides of the feeling that you expressed. It does not pass judgment on it.

Let's take another one.

A friend says, "Do you think I should try for that job in Oakland I told you about or should I stay where I am. I'm really quite concerned about this." And you say, "You're not sure <u>what</u> is the best thing to do." This is a freeing response.

"Well how do they differ?" This is a freeing response. Freeing response can be of many different kinds, but I think all you have to do is to feel inside yourself whether you feel free to inquire, to go farther, to explore, to investigate, to change your mind. If you would, it's a freeing response. But if you feel that you have to defend a position, that you have to justify something, that you do not want to explore, then, if you feel that way, you feel bound. You would, as we say in every day life, feel, as if the other were "putting me in a bind."

Or he might have said, "Well you'd be foolish to stay in your present job with a chance like that Oakland plum." This is a binding response. Chances are you're going to say, "Well, I don't know," and start to talk about the good parts of your job.

Or he might say, "You always have trouble making up your mind, don't you?" That's a binding response. He now talks about your characteristics and you have to defend them.

"Well, why ask me, you're the one that has to live with what happens?" This is different than, "Is there anything I can do that will be helpful?" He's saying, "Take responsibility for your own life," but he says it in such a way that does not invite exploration; it's rejection in that particular case.

Or suppose he says, "By the way, did I tell you about the time I got a ticket in Oakland," after you've asked a serious question and he goes off at that angle, that's a binding response. He closes down open inquiry.

Or he might say, "I don't really feel that I have enough information to be able to make a responsible answer." I see this as a freeing response.

Do you see some of the differences between these? If we were to look at the kinds of responses, what kinds would they be. I have made a rough list that I think proceeds from freeing to binding. At the same time, I would not be willing to argue that any item which is in one place shouldn't be displaced by a couple steps upward or downward. I'm merely attempting to give you the feeling of the continuum.

Freeing	Either	Binding
Attentive listening	Open question	Changing subject
Paraphrase	Closed question	Interpretation
Perception check		Advice and persuasion
Positive concern		Expectations
Giving information		Praise
Report feeling		Disapproval
Hypotheses for action		Emotional obligation

Probably the most freeing response is "Attentive Listening" by which I don't mean that you just sit quietly but there is eye contact, there is facial espression; you do not have distractions such as a phone that you're going to answer; you're giving the other person your undivided attention. You give him cues continually that you are listening, whether

you nod or say "Um hum" or "I see" or "Yes" or "What then?" It is an attentive listening. It is not just silence.

Next, would be "Paraphrase." "I'm not sure I know what you mean. Let me see if I get it. Is this it?" which is a form of attentive listening to see if the message that you're getting is the message he is sending.

Next would be "Perception check." I hope that you see now that perception check is a form of paraphrase, but it is paraphrase of feeling. Because feelings are not usually expressed directly and often are expressed non-verbally, we check out our perception as a matter of concern for our relation with the other person. Thus it is a freeing response.

"Positive concern." This means reporting my positive feelings and concerns for the other as a person. This does not say, "I like your idea." I'm not talking about his ideas, I am not talking about his behavior. I might think his ideas are lousy. I may think his behavior is inexcusable, but what I am talking about is the other as a person. A statement of positive concern is any kind of statement which is seen as reporting my feeling about the other as a person and my concern for his welfare. (I say "reporting" specifically and I do not mean "expressing." It is a very different thing to say, "That's a wonderful dress you're wearing today," which may be an expression of positive feeling, and saying "I really enjoy you," which is a report of feeling.") I'm referring here to reporting my positive concern for the other as a person.

Next would be "Giving information." This would be reporting factual observation. For example, if I have information about the standard of living in Oakland and I give it to the person who's trying to make up his mind. There are many different kinds of information, but when it is given as information, it is relatively a freeing response.

Next is the direct report of my own feelings when given as natural events without coercion behind it, in the spirit that "this is data which is relevant to understanding our relationship." These may be feelings of doubt, feelings of inadequacies, feelings of weakness, feelings of affection, feelings of irritation, feelings of resentment, whatever it is, as long as I can get across the feelings that are inside me and that it has to be a direct report.

"Hypotheses for action." What I mean by that is what you usually call "suggestions" but many suggestions are not given as hypotheses for action but they are given as commands. If you say, "I wonder, have you thought about doing this?" then that's a hypotheses about a kind of action to take.

In the middle of the list we have, "Open questions," which do not require a "yes" or "no" answer. This is a seeking for information. I really can't classify that as a freeing response or as a binding response because it depends upon whether it's a relevant question. If the individual has just told you about something and you say, "Gee, how did you feel about that?" that's an open question which would be called a freeing response. But if you have just described something and then he asks an open question that is unrelated to this, that changes the subject, then obviously it would be a binding response.

"Closed questions" likewise can be relevant or they can be changes of subject. Whatever they are, they are less free than the open question, because the closed question can only have a "yes" or "no" answer, or it can only have a strictly factual answer. "How old were you when it happened?" The only answer is six. So it's a closed question. So if you compare these two, the open question is a freer response than the closed question. It provides more leeway.

Now let's consider the binding responses. "Changing the subject," would be a somewhat binding response because it limits the freedom in the situation. A particularly good example of changing the subject of the binding response is when the individual has expressed very strong feeling. The wife says, "Oh, I'm so unhappy about what happened today, and I felt so inadequate when the kids did that. Really I was just in tears and tatters." And the husband says, "Did the milkman leave the bill?" You may as well slap her in the face.

Next is "Interpretation." You do that because "Well, you know you always do such and such because your Mother . . ." Explaining the basis for the other's behavior is an interpretation.

Next would be "advice and persuasion," "Well, the thing you ought to do is such and such." We're really now beginning to get into the binding category.

"Expectations." Here I would include expectations that he must behave as he did in the past. "What's the matter, you're acting different today?" Some of you may find that when you go home a situation will come up in which you think it would be appropriate to report feelings. So you report feelings directly to your husband instead of beating around the bush with some indirect questions you've used in the past. And he says, "Say what did they do to you at the institute? You're different than you were. What are you trying to do?" Now this reflects an attempt to say, "Well, you shouldn't be different." It's one way that we force other people back into the behavior that they are trying to grow out of. So you may say, "Yes, I'm different today, I'm trying to grow. Any objection?" Of course that's a closed question!

Expectations not only include expectations of the past but also expectations of your future behavior such as "I know that you will do such and such." "I know that you can do such and such." I recall when I was at the University of Oregon I had thought that they had agreed to accept my doctoral exams at Harvard so I wouldn't have to take them over for my Ph.D. Suddenly with only a month to go before the exams (and I had not been studying for them), they said, "You'll have to take your exams over." I was kind of shaken up by this. I hadn't studied in this direction. When I expressed the fact that I really didn't have much confidence and that I was pretty put out because I'd been studying different things, I got a lot of this: "I know that you can do this." "A person with your background and experience, you're going to have no trouble at all." My reaction was, "you people are very confident, but I'm the one that has to take the exams."

Next, "Praise." That may surprise you to see praise as a binding response so let me indicate what I mean by praise. By praise I mean a statement of approval about what the other feels, thinks or does without any specification that indicates why. By contrast let's say a child who is working in manual training comes up with a bookshelf he has made and you say, "Every nail went in and not a nail was bent." That's giving information about standards. "And furthermore, the hammer never marred the wood. There isn't a hammer dent in it. That's a good job." You have now given valid information and indicated the standard it meets. I don't call that praise. Priase is when he brings it up and you say, "You did a wonderful job, Johnny." You may recognize that as an indirect expression of feeling—translation probably means, "I like it." But how does he do it again, you haven't given him any information about what led you to say, "I like it." So it's a very different thing to say "I like it because there are no bent nails and because there are no hammer dents on it." What I mean by praise is such statements as "Good job," "Excellent lesson."

Next would be "Disapproval." As a general category for blame, censure of the person, censure of the person's traits, feelings, inputing bad motives to him. All of these things we lump under disapproval.

Next are "Commands and orders" —very binding responses because they say "Do it and don't look for alternatives."

Is there anything more binding than a command or an order? I think there is.

It is what I would call expressions of "Emotional obligation." It is the attempt to get the other person to do something through arousing feelings of guilt or shame or inferiority. "How can you do this to me, when I have

always sacrificed for you?" "I have looked forward to your going to medical school when you were grown up and now you tell me that you don't want to go to medical school. How can you do this?" To me that seems more binding than commands and orders because you can refuse commands and orders without guilt feelings, but not the emotional obligation . . . even though you feel it is unjustified.

Having said that a rough scale runs from attentive listening all the way through to emotional obligation, from freeing to binding, I now wish to modify this whole scheme. I said the first day that the meaning of any response depends upon the relationship. Consequently, you now have to see this as a sliding scale. The effect of any response listed depends upon the relationship that has been established between the two people. The greater the degree of trust that is established, the more you can use binding responses without producing a binding effect. Where we have a very trusting relationship and say, "I know that you're really going to do such and such," they respond, "Well, don't get worried if I don't." It's perfectly open. They're not bound by this. For instance, disapproval is not very binding in a real trusting relationship. To the extent that you develop an open relationship based on trust, you have more leeway in action. I would be quite surprised if there aren't a lot of you who are feeling a lot freer to say what's on your mind and to be yourself without fear of being misunderstood than you did the first day in the group. Why? Because the first day you were conscious of the fact that you didn't know these other people and their standards and their values, that you weren't quite sure you could trust them with information about yourself, and, consequently, you had to be more cautious or what you said.

Let's look at what happens in the absence of a trusting relationship. Knowing that there is not a trusting relationship you may think, "I'll shift to the most freeing kind of response I know. I'll just engage in attentive listening." You do this. Ultimately you find out that the person feels you were trying to get as much information about him as possible which can subsequently be used against him. In your effort to make a freeing response, he saw a binding response. He may feel, "I don't know how you're passing judgment on this." You had probably better use a variety of responses, including reporting your feelings at an appropriate point, so that he will discover, "I feel so much better now that I know the kinds of things that irritate you."

I hope you can see that this whole scale slides to the extent that you have a trusting relationship you can use a much wider variety of responses without fear of being misunderstood. To the extent that the relationship is not trusting, you'd better stay pretty closely in the freeing end of the continuum, if you want to be helpful to the other.

I would like to talk briefly about one kind of response, "praise." Praise typically has been thought of as a human relations tool, as a piece of psychological candy, as a kind of reward to get the kind of behavior you want. I think there is increasing evidence that it doesn't work this way. Keep in mind that by praise I mean just the expression of approval without giving information.

I'd like to ask you what your experience is when people praise you. Do you find yourselves doing things like this?

Somebody praises a house or garden and the owner is quick to point out the defects in it. Somebody comes into your house and says, "My it's so nice to come into a place that's all so neatly arranged, so well kept and so orderly," and you say, "Well, it isn't always. I'm really not as good a housekeeper as this indicates." Or have you ever said, "Well, I really can't take the credit for it." or "Oh you're just saying that" or "That was just luck" or "I like yours too" or "Well I do the best I can." What's the meaning of these expressions. If praise is as welcome as we all say, why do we get so defensive when praised? I submit we get defensive because it usually has a binding effect on us. It has a binding effect because praise makes people uncomfortable, because it is seen as an effort to change them. Actually, what this comes from is a more general principle that says, "Any time you evaluate a person, you are in some way trying to motivate him, to move him in a certain direction, to change him." So we try to steer him like in "Hide the Thimble" by saying, "Hotter, hotter, colder, colder, hotter, colder." But we translate this into, "That's good; that's good; no, that's not good; that's not good; that's good, that's good." So you're attempting to motivate him by your use of praise and he knows that you're attempting to change him. So he feels defensive.

Secondly, praise creates differences in status. The person who wants to increase his own status sits in judgment on other people. If he is the superior, it's to praise others congruent with his status. If Piccaso says to a painter, "You're a wonderful artist," because Piccaso himself is seen as a fine artist we see his praise as enhancing this painter. But if somebody who has never painted in his life, has no pretentions to art or anything else, says to Piccaso, "You're a real good painter," it is seen as almost an insult. He has no right to pass judgment on Piccaso. We might accept his statement, "I like the painting," but not "You're a good artist." So when somebody says, "You did very well," he is implying "I am superior to you and able to pass judgment on you." This is the second reason praise makes us uneasy.

Third, we often feel that the change which the other person wants us to make is not one which we want to make, but one which he wants made.

When we praise Tommy for making it to the bathroom on time, we are probably not so much delighted on Tommy's behalf as on our own.

The fourth problem with praise is that it puts us under the obligation to be praiseworthy people. If somebody says, "You did a beautiful job on that lesson," you may feel "Oh, golly, now they're going to expect me to do it every time." And so you say, "Well that was just luck, it may not be so good next time." So praise puts an obligation to be praise-worthy.

A fifth point. Another thing which praise does, praise increases the interpersonal distance. It increases the interpersonal distance because any time you have the right to evaluate the other person you are no longer an equal. Superiors evaluate inferiors. Now that's quite obvious when someone shows disapproval. You feel that he is putting himself above you. But if you really examine your reaction when the other person praises you, you often feel that he is putting himself above you and thus increasing the emotional distance from you. Praise is not conductive to intimacy, in short.

To summarize if you want to develop initiative in students, if you want to develop judgment and problem-solving ability in people, praise will fail because to liberate these qualities in people you have to rely on internal motivation. You need to make people feel that they are free of your control. You may need to establish a more equalitarian atmosphere; you may need to establish more closeness and more intimacy and the frequent use of praise avoids this.

Let me close by suggesting a couple of experiments that you can try as an investigation into the nature of praise. The next time you praise somebody with just unqualified approval, note whether he opens up and talks more about it or whether he becomes defensive, diffident, and uncomfortable. Does he seem to want to continue talking about the topic or does he want to change it? Does he seem to be more motivated to work or does he seem to be less motivated?

As a second part of this experiment, I want you to check your reaction when people praise you. What do you do and say? How do you feel?

There's a last experiment that I rather doubt that I have the courage to try, but I think it illustrates the point I'm making. The next time that some praise comes your way, indicating that the praiser wants you to believe that you are competent or good or smart or attractive, respond to his evaluation of you by saying something like "I guess you think I'm very competent," or "I guess you think I'm a pretty good supervisor." His reaction to this may indicate to you that his praise was intended to do something other than what you were expecting.